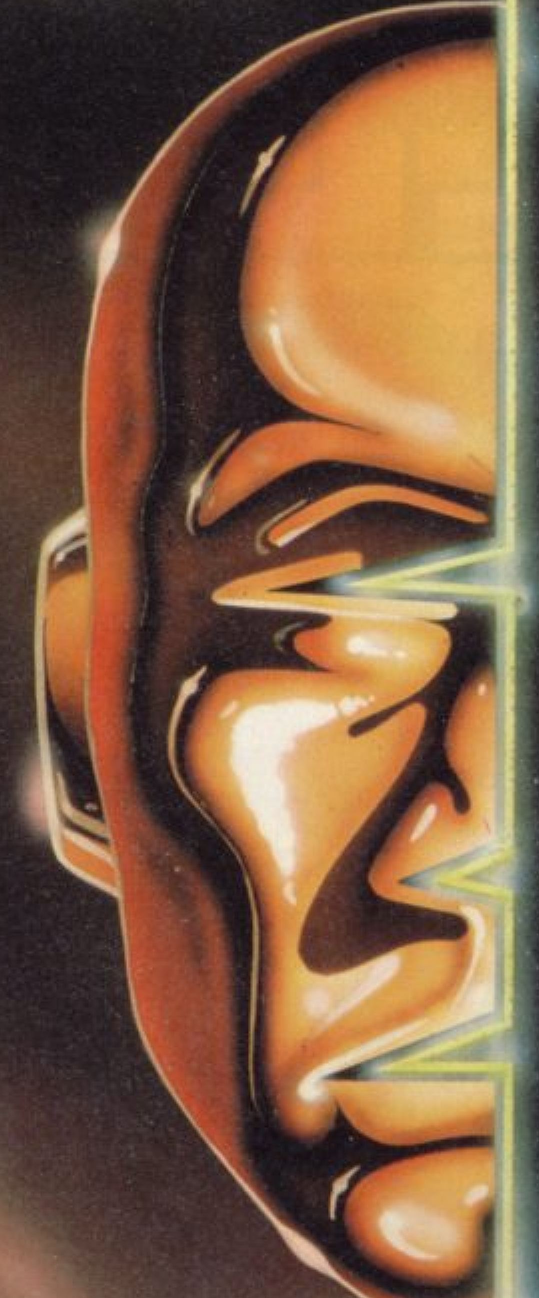

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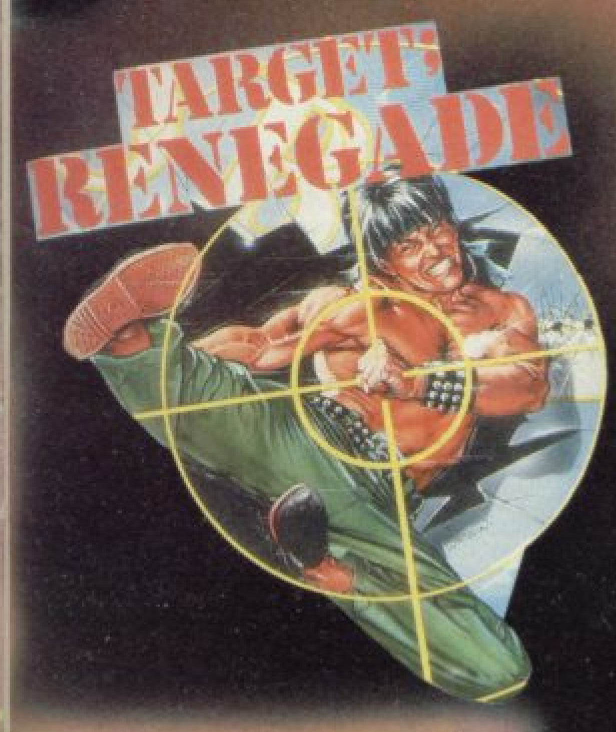
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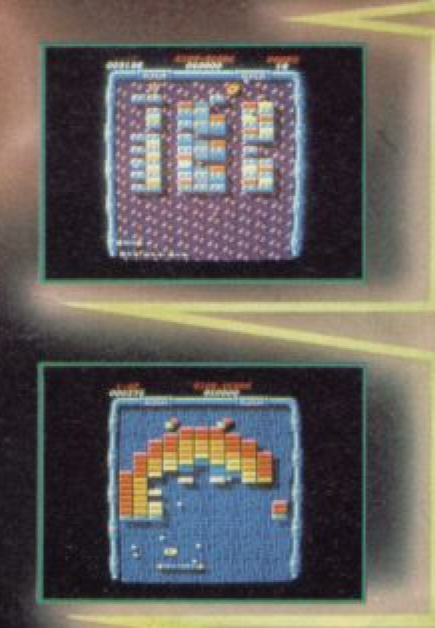
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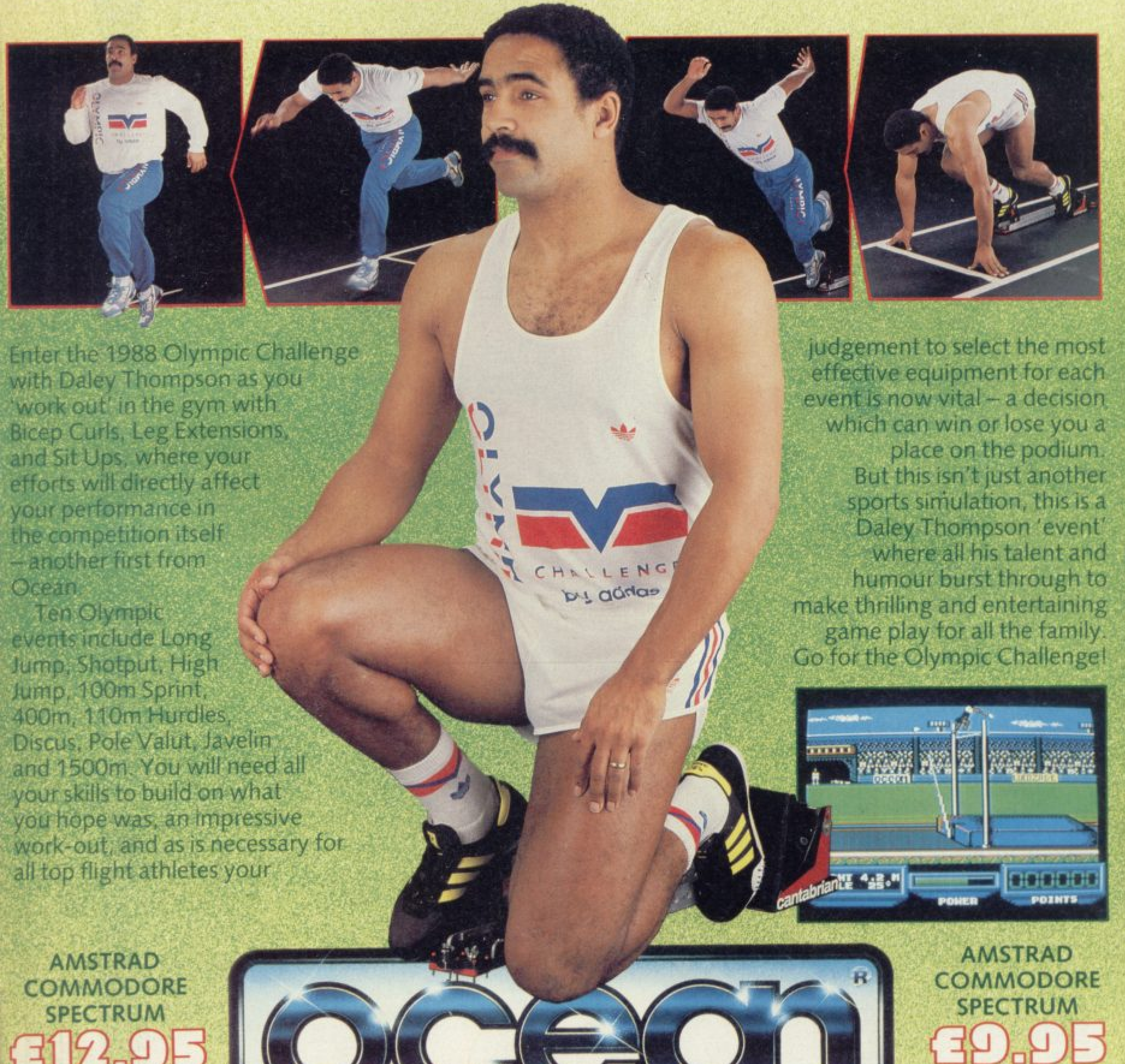


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ISSUE 10
SEPTEMBER 1988

ARCHIMEDES SPECIAL

Are 32-bits better than 16? TGM delves into Acorn's wonder-machine and looks at some games, while Robin Candy tests out two art utilities to see if they can better 16-bit *DeluxePaint II* and *Dégas Elite*. But do they . . . ? **Pages 30-35**

THIS ISSUE . . .

REGULARS

FEATURES

COMPETITIONS

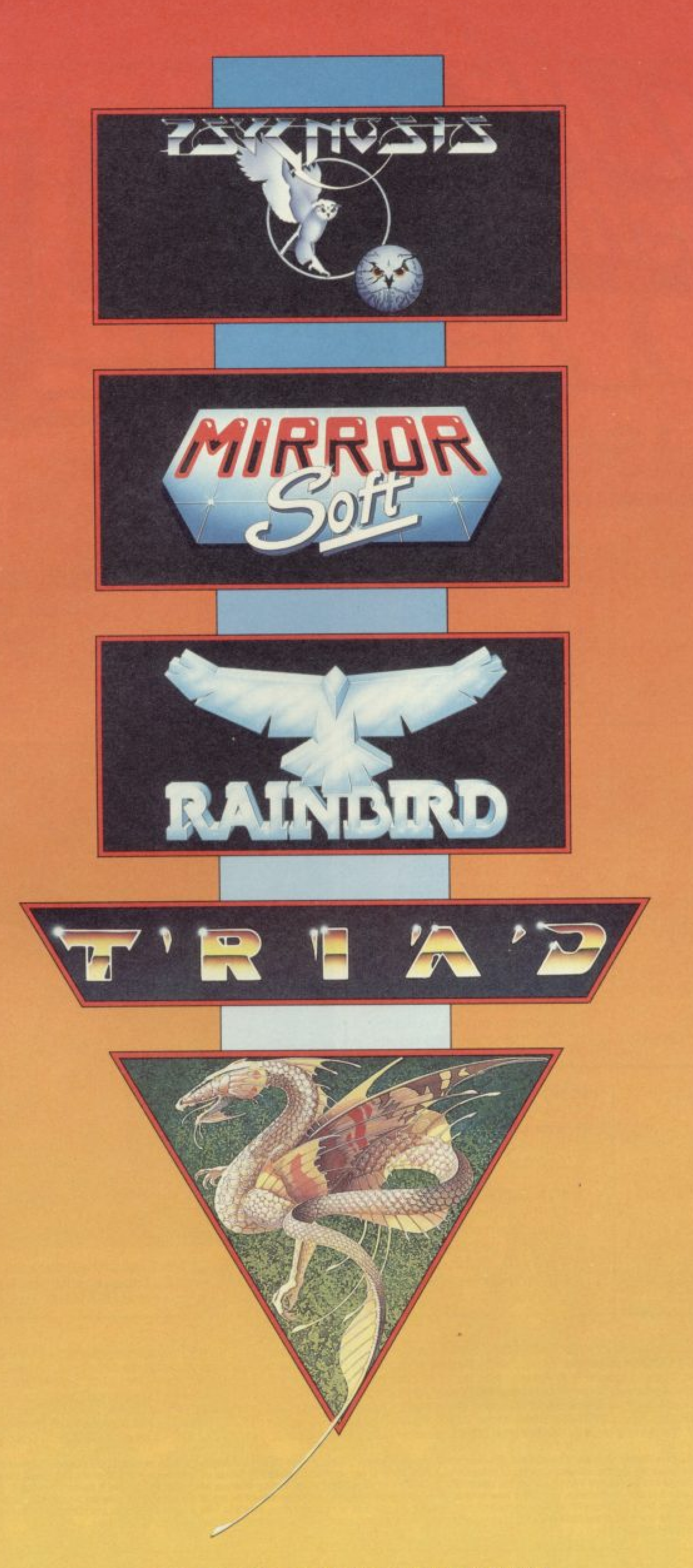


CONFRONTATION: COIN-OP
A mega three pages, set down in the Big Smoke this time, with Deith Leisure and the very latest coin-ops. **PAGE 27**

Issue 11 of THE GAMES MACHINE goes on sale on September 15, see page 122 for details. Queues will form, but so what? Swat them aside, jump to the front and DEMAND your copy!

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COVER DESIGN BY OLIVER FREY



TRIAD - A NEW FORCE IN THE 16 BIT MARKET PLACE

TGM REPORT

Atari triumph in 16-bit battles

by Stuart Wynne

Atari appear to be winning the 16-bit war thanks to their Summer Pack bundle and reliable reputation – despite a £100 price rise to £399, the same as the Commodore Amiga.

John Stevens of John's Computer Store in Airdrie, Scotland reports that only 1% of STs are returned as faulty, while the Amiga has been suffering 35%.

CBS Computers in Bexhill, East Sussex admit the Amiga used to be very bad, but say it is now improving.

However, a source close to Atari who has monitored the figures says Amiga returns remain around 25%, compared to 2-3% for the ST. 'If you [as a retailer] know one in four is going to come back you're not going to sell it,' he said.

Commodore Marketing Manager Dean Barrett offered: 'The Amiga's rate is much lower than that quoted. However, should a faulty product be found Commodore will replace it.' He said Commodore had introduced a rigorous new quality-control system in late July.

ST sales up

And by putting together a huge software bundle, uprating the 520STFM's disk drive from 0.5Mb to 1Mb and running a big advertising campaign, Atari have actually increased sales despite the traditional summer slump.

Spokesman Peter Walker says 'we've got an enormous bandwagon rolling behind the ST at the moment', both of first-time computer buyers and people moving up from 8-bits. He estimates there are 130,000 to 140,000 STs in Britain.

'We're finding that the education market and guys well into their forties and fifties are buying,' he adds, stressing that the ST is not only a games machine.

Richard Austin, Managing Director of leading retailer Evesham Micros in Worcestershire, says that the Summer Pack bundles have been selling 'unbelievably well' – even though he's advertised standard 520STFMs without the software and souped-up drive at £100 less.

But like several other retailers, Austin found the Amiga's £100 price drop 'not tremendously significant'.

Some shops, such as the 16-Bit Centre in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, have experienced a noticeable increase in Amiga sales but generally the ST is said to be leading sales despite rough parity in price.

On the software side, independent retailer Barry Balcanquall says 16-bit software sales remain split 70/30 in favour of the ST.

Nothing but the truth: Code Masters have finally confirmed they'll be doing full-price games as well as budgets, as revealed in TGM**009**. The first title, rumoured to be an **Activision reject** at £9.99, will be on sale in the third week of November. Code Masters are also 'doing games specifically targeted at the little girlies, that **the boys** won't be interested in,' according to Operations Manager Bruce Everiss. They'll be out on budget around the same time.

US Gold get theirs by rereleasing hits on budget – Kixx, that is. The new £2.99 Kixx label kicks off this month with *Gauntlet, Metrocross, World Games, Ace Of Aces* and *10th Frame*. Old titles from other software houses may follow.

Just good friends: Hewson and Telecomsoft 'have at last reconciled their much-publicised wrangle over the publication of the two Graftgold games, *Morpheus* and *Magnetron*, and their differences have been amicably reconciled without further **court hearings**. Both parties are happy with their agreement.' Now, isn't that **nice** for a joint statement? The row blew up at last year's *PCW* Show when Telecomsoft lured the Graftgold programmers away from Hewson.

'Spectrum clone' close to release

by Barnaby Page

1989 will be the year of interactive games if a small South Wales firm can hit the big time with its new micro running Spectrum software.

And Swansea-based Miles Gordon Technology (MGT) are 'just about ready to go' with their new machine called SAM, though it will take a while to hit the high streets.

Founder Alan Miles says the new computer, set to be unveiled at a ZX Microfair in December and on mail-order sale by February, will have a built-in networking system so several players on different machines can join in the same game.

'We're trying to encourage software houses to develop interactive games,' says Miles, formerly Sir Clive Sinclair's man in the Far East. 'In simplest terms, you've got one person at one end of the tennis court and another at the other.'

And at between £100 and £150, with 256K RAM expandable to 512K through add-ons, the company's SAM could challenge Amstrad's Spectrum +2 – currently £139 with just 128K of RAM.

High-street doubts

But MGT are unlikely to challenge Amstrad in the major chain stores – or even in shops at all – until next summer.

Says Miles: 'The computer corner stores are no longer as strong as they were, and the quality of service in some major high-street stores is not what we'd want our products to be associated with.'

And Alan Dickinson, who chooses computers for all the Dixons shops, says 'their sales potential is really very very small. The Sinclair market is totally controlled by Amstrad, who own the brand and promote that very very heavily.

'If it's just a substitution [for existing Amstrad Spectrums] we wouldn't take it.'

So MGT will offer it by mail through MGT Direct, emulating the successful mail-order PC manufacturer Dell. And 'people that will get their hands on it first will be people in our user groups with our existing products', says Miles – there are some 15,000 users of MGT's Disciple and Plus D Spectrum products on the firm's list.

SAM – 'it's the best name we've thought of so far' – is being built in Japan. Its existence was first exclusively revealed by our Spectrum sister magazine, CRASH, in December 1987, when it was described as a 'superclone'.

Alan Miles (far right) and the SAM team: offering twice the Spectrum memory for a few pounds more



It's a wonderful world: Animators at the **Walt Disney** studios in Los Angeles are putting cartoon characters on computer for the movie *Oliver And Company*, expected in November. Now, instead of **laboriously** drawing each frame, they can instruct a graphics workstation to get those scenes rolling. A Disney spokeswoman assured the public that Mickey Mouse is safe from pixelisation, though – and that every family's favourite studio will still let human hands paint final images using the computer-generated graphics as a guide. Some things are still **sacred**.

Little things please little people: The Children's World chain, which sells babies . . . sorry, sells everything for babies-to-13-year-olds, is to take £1.99 software. And full-price for the **less-than-fully-grown** may be next. Finuala Kavanagh of R&R Distribution, which supplies the chain with software, told us: 'Possibly nearer Christmas we will be putting a small range of full-price software in.' But we understand from sources so highly placed you can **hardly see their knees** that there won't be nuthing from Code Masters . . . strange, when you consider it must be the only software house with a **four-year-old playtester**. Boots, who own the ten-store chain, hope to expand it to 40 shops within a year.

Then you saw it, now you don't: As the nights grow longer and our thoughts turn fondly to the September PC Show – and this is one place we *won't* be plugging the 24-page fact-packed *PC Showcase* supplement, thank you very much – we suddenly remember that at last year's *PCW* Show Atari unveiled a CD-ROM machine and promised it would be on **your local retailer's shelves** by Christmas 1987. We waited, we even bought a plug, but nothing happened. Now an Atari spokesman tells us 'we're probably going to launch it in volume next year' – 1989, that is, **four years** after Atari announced they were getting into CD-ROM terribly soon. Loading CD games into an ST, the £399 box will be called . . . 'um, the Atari CD-ROM machine'.

Loadsamacs: Even WIMPs can make it big in the land of opportunity. Fast-growing Apple Computer last month recorded a three-month profit of US$91.3 million (almost £55 million), 71% more than in the same period a year ago. Apple's Californian bosses ascribed much of the increase to the Macintosh II's popularity – at £3,444 to £4,364 (UK prices) it's challenging PC-compatibles in

Spectrum soaring as survey shows 8-bit still lives

A year ago they said 8-bit would die – but it's still alive and kicking.

That's the message of a recent survey by chart compilers Gallup, who found that the familiar Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC still account for at least 45% of *all* home computers in Britain, despite the arrival of the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST and the growth of cheap PCs.

The Sinclair Spectrums are still the leaders, adding up to 24% of all UK micros. But most of them are still the old 48K models, with the new Amstrad-style Spectrum +3 holding only about ½%.

Commodore come next with 17%, the majority of which is due to the ageing Commodore 64.

And Amstrad's non-Spectrum models come in third with 15%, half of which is the CPC range and a third the PCW, used for business word processing as well as games. The rest of the Amstrad cut is made up by their IBM-compatible PCs.

The remaining 44% of the overall market is made from a mixture of Atari (2%), Acorn (10%) and other companies.

The total sales of all the 8-bit games magazines together have also gone up considerably in the last 18 months, which is seen as an encouraging sign for the software and hardware manufacturers.

One possible reason is that many 8-bit users who move up to 16-bits keep their old machines.

Summer slump is time for free gifts

It may be summertime, but the living isn't easy for software houses. So they're offering prizes and tokens in an attempt to boost sales through these traditionally slack months when not much software is sold.

Thalamus, Grandslam Entertainments, US Gold and distributor Microdealer all have their own promotions running.

Thalamus's Gold Rush scheme, publicising their latest Commodore 64/128 title *Hawkeye* will have just nine winners. Among all the *Hawkeye* cassettes going into retailers are three 'gold' cassettes and six 'yellow' cassettes, indistinguishable on the outside from ordinary packages.

When a buyer finds a gold cassette he or she wins an Amstrad Studio 100 is won; for a yellow cassette the buyer receives a ghettoblaster.

It's frequently compared to Roald Dahl's classic children's book *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory*, where gold tickets were tucked inside chocolate bars, though Thalamus boss Paul Cooper says he's never read the novel.

Thalamus's Paul Cooper: never heard of chocolate factory



'Reward for customers'

Grandslam Entertainments are enclosing Frequent Buyer Bonus Vouchers with *Peter Beardsley's International Football*, *Chubby Gristle* and all their other games from now on.

There is one voucher in every game. When the customer collects seven he or she receives a £10 gift token redeemable for *any* product at Boots or WH Smith – not necessarily from the computer department. Ten vouchers entitle the buyer to a £15 token.

Grandslam's Duncan Lothian explains: 'The point of the promotion is to reward our customers who buy our games. Obviously the voucher promotion works both ways, we'll hopefully sell more product and the buyer gets a bonus to the game itself.'

US Gold's promotion comes from their recently-announced marketing tie-up with Pepsi-Cola – see the feature in our *PC Showcase* supplement for more details.

Uncovered

Distributors Microdealer have the Great Cover-Up promotion, also based on tokens. For every £5 worth of Microdealer's software bought, the customer receives a Great Cover-Up token, which can be used to buy things from the Great Cover-Up catalogue.

Microdealer boss Lee Ginty says: 'It's the first time this type of promotion has been open to anyone in the software market. What we're doing is providing the customer with a strong incentive to buy from independent dealers [ie not large chains], not just a one-off purchase, but to keep them coming back.'

The software retailer will tell you whether something comes from Microdealer and thus counts toward a Great Cover-Up token.

The Great Microdealer Cover-Up: an incentive to shop at independent stores



Amstrad secret trickles out

by Barnaby Page

Full details of Amstrad's 16-bit games machine are now emerging as retailers and software houses gear up for its expected September launch.

TGM understands from a senior manager at one UK software house that the new computer, expected to be called the Sinclair Professional PC, has no expansion ports.

Observers agree this means Amstrad are aiming strictly at the games market, although the machine will be partly IBM PC-compatible, because business users would need expansion ports for add-on cards such as extra memory and modem communications.

Good PC tidings?

TGM understands that though the new machine will be based on Amstrad's PC1512, that will also continue to be produced, aimed more at business users.

Alan Dickinson, of high-street chain Dixons, observed that the success of cheap PC-compatibles like Olivetti's PC1 might bode well for Amstrad.

'We're now seeing people migrate toward the low-end MS-DOS offerings,' he said. 'They don't necessarily want to buy a business machine. But if you're talking about an MS–DOS games machine you're talking about a schizophrenic model.'

Maxwell enters satellite battle

by Robin Hogg

Newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell has struck back at his archrival Rupert Murdoch in the battle for satellite TV viewers.

Last month TGM reported how Murdoch (*The Sun* etc) is teaming up with Amstrad to offer a £199.99 satellite dish which will receive his four free Sky channels. It will be sold by high-street stores under their own brand names or the Amstrad label.

Now Maxwell (*The Daily Mirror*, Mirrorsoft etc) is producing his own dish – but it could cost as much as £400.

The attraction, according to Maxwell Satellite Communications, is that it will receive 16 channels, including the popular Premiere (devoted to films) and WH Smith channels such as Screensport, Lifestyle and Children's Channel.

But while Murdoch's channels will be free to watch, Maxwell's will charge for the privilege: a mixture of subscription and pay-for-what-you-watch payments are being discussed. A spokesman hinted average payments could be around £5 per month.

Catherine Baudino, Chief Executive of Maxwell Satellite Communications, pointed out to TGM: 'It enables the buyer to have 16 channels to come into their home using the D-MAC technology compared with the PAL-format four channels that the Murdoch/Sugar deal will offer.'

Experts say D-MAC satellite transmissions have better picture and sound quality than PAL transmissions. At present D-MAC dishes cannot receive PAL transmissions or vice versa, though new research may enable Maxwell's dishes to receive the four Sky channels.

High-street electrical stores such as Comet and Tandy are watching the situation but say it's early days yet. Tandy's Danny Curley commented: 'We're keeping an open mind on both the Amstrad and BSB systems but nothing will really happen until the beginning of next year, when the satellites go up – if they go up, that is.' Tandy have around 400 UK outlets.

Analysis

While Maxwell's dish will be up to twice the price of Sugar's – more when you add the viewing fees – it will offer a lot more. And if fierce competition leads to price cuts, Maxwell will probably be able to lop a few pounds off £400 more easily than Sugar and Murdoch can go down from £199.

Mirrorsoft work on their image with new label

Mirrorsoft are putting their tastiest eggs in a new basket and promising 18 games a year on the new label Imageworks. The first, *Skychase*, is reviewed on Commodore Amiga this issue.

The Imageworks range will extend from simulations to puzzle games, setting it apart from Mirrorsoft's existing labels, which mostly specialise in particular genres – strategy and adventure from PSS and Mindscape, simulations from Spectrum Holobyte, etc.

'We perceive Imageworks as a mass-market type of label,' said Managing Director Peter Bilotta at its launch last month.

He added: 'It doesn't have to be gratuitous violence, it doesn't have to be heavy arcade action – it can be fun.'

But Bilotta did not rule out the possibility of a long-term conversion deal with a coin-op manufacturer to follow the Atari Games licence *Blasteroids*.

Besides avoiding the trap of arcade, film and character licences which swallows so many software houses, Bilotta aims to trawl wide for programmers. 'We will be acquiring creative talent – not necessarily from the States, there is a lot of talent in Europe,' he said. 'We don't have to spend lots of money acquiring heavy arcade rights.'

Star programmers

Among the British programmers contributing to Imageworks is Jon Ritman (*Matchday*, *Head Over Heels*), who is one of several on the *Bomboozal* project.

An abstract puzzle game with designer set, *Bomboozal* is a team effort with levels by Jeff Minter as well as Ritman. Says Marketing Manager Tom Watson: 'For the first time, groups of programmers from all over the place are working together on it.'

Bomboozal's overall designers are Tony Crowther and David Bishop, who are also collaborating on *Fernandez Must Die* for Imageworks. *Fernandez Must Die* is an arcade adventure set in a South American dictatorship; the player sets out to assassinate the ruling general.

Denton Designs (*Where Time Stood Still*) are writing *Foxx Fights Back*, a chicken-biting simulation where the player is a fox. And *Speedball* for Amiga, ST and PC is a futuristic sport game ('not wholly unrelated to *Rollerball*' – Watson) from The Bitmap Brothers, programmers of *Xenon*.

Also under development is an Adrian Stephens game provisionally titled *Mainframe*, which Watson calls the 'single most fastest 3-D vector-graphics product available'.

Bitmap Brothers: en route to Imageworks



Bigger bundle

It is also believed that several Mastertronic games will be sold as part of the £299 package, as well as the four-game GO! compilation mentioned in TGM**009**'s exclusive report.

'Mastertronic for some unknown reason have quite a close relationship with Amstrad,' said the manager of yet another software house.

And though Essex-based Amstrad will say nothing, one of their top executives in Spain has confirmed the machine's existence.

Jose Luis Dominguez, an Amstrad board member and boss of its Madrid-based subsidiary Indescomp, told a Spanish newspaper of the English firm's plans for four new micros.

Besides the Sinclair Professional PC, there will be three business PCs: one based on IBM's new PS/2 range, one based on the IBM PC-AT and a model with an 80386 chip said to be 40% cheaper than its competitors.

IBM deal

Amstrad, whose PC1512 and PC1640 are among the cheapest IBM-compatibles available, recently strengthened their links with the US manufacturers, creators of the PC.

A deal signed last month means that Amstrad can use IBM's patented technology without fear of attack – or paying royalties.

Recently IBM have been cracking down on PC-clone manufacturers and demanding royalty payments to make up for the sales they might have lost to cheaper competition. Amstrad have sold about half a million PCs.

■ **Correction:** The Sinclair Professional PC article in TGM**009** stated, perhaps misleadingly, that Sir Clive Sinclair 'invented' the Spectrum in 1982. In fact, the Spectrum was developed by the firm Nine Tiles under Sinclair's general guidance.

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the fight for **businessmen's wallets**. TGM health warning: despite the Apple turnover, many games do not run on the Mac II.

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Wouldyabelieveit? Dept, Part 1:

We'd just finished writing the item above and we felt so financial we'd turned **pink**. So we decided to ask secretive Amstrad when *their* third-quarter results (as in 'Fell off back of Dixons lorry, £71,435; Spectrum product development, 11p') would be available. Long pause. Lady at the other end says 'we're not sure, really . . . '. Maybe you can fool **all the people all the time**.

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Wouldyabelieveit? Dept, Part 2:

The PCW8256 is called the Joyce after boss Alan Sugar's **secretary**, one Joyce Carey. (We read it somewhere else first.) Given Sugar's **barrow-boy** background, we might expect the **Arfur** next.

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Wouldyabelieveit? Dept, Part 3:

We went to the launch of Mirrorsoft's new Imageworks label (see story in these news pages), and sat down next to the marketing manager of a well-known high-street computer chain. He glanced over the Perrier and began: 'Are they *all* clones at Amstrad?' Someone who wants to **talk about PCs**, we thought, stomach heaving in anticipation. Then he continued: 'They all have moustaches and beards like Alan Sugar – even **the women**.'

Amstrad Consumer Electronics Wouldyabelieveit? Dept, Part 4: The sheer value, that is. Amstrad look set to bring out a surprising new bundle for the CPC 6128 including monitor, desk, TV tuner, clock radio and a retail price of **£499**. It's said to be aimed at people who want to do **work at home**. But whatever happened to the printer?

An even smaller slice of Pye: Now TV-toters can have the best of both worlds with clear monitor reception as well as the flexibility of portable television. At 11 inches and £299.99 Pye's P1115 is decidedly smaller and costs more than your average television – but as the manufacturers point out it can do **a lot more** . . . like receive teletext, **stun** us with high FST resolution and **be tilted** through 30 degrees. It also has SCART and RGB connections allowing link-up to satellite tuners, video recorders and of course computers. When Pye are not in the sky they're on (01) 689 2166.

Flare One pokes its head out – body due later

The Flare One: what you have to know

- Console-style with special sound and graphics chips
- Designed by three ex-Sinclair Research Loki veterans
- Set for release within 12 months at about £200, with three utilities
- No manufacturer . . . yet

by Warren Lapworth and Stuart Wynne

A revolutionary new games machine is slowly being dragged through birth by three former Sinclair Research men, promising a speed closely rivalling the Amiga and even the Archimedes – despite its old-fashioned 8-bit Z80 processor.

It's been unveiled. But contrary to reports in some computer magazines the Flare One won't be on the shelves this Christmas for £200, or even £20,000. According to Cambridge-based inventors Flare Technology the earliest possible launch date is some six to 12 months away, at about £200 with a software bundle.

And as yet no-one has agreed to actually produce the supermachine, which would require an investment of five to ten million pounds.

TGM has learned that Flare approached Amstrad and were turned away. Apparently another firm is now interested.

Sinclair origin

The genesis of this console-style computer lies in Sinclair Research, home of the original Spectrum, where the Flare One's three designers began work on the famous 'super Spectrum' – Loki.

But when Amstrad took over Sinclair in 1986 many technical people had to leave.

Determined not to let their hard work go to waste, John Mathieson, Ben Cheese and Martin Brennan established Flare Technology.

High performance

The Flare One's designers hope for top performance by combining two custom chips with the main Z80 processor, controlling 768K of RAM.

There'll be a video/blitter chip enabling up to three million pixels to be plotted in one second, and a Digital Signal Processor for audio – a RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) chip, as in the Acorn Archimedes.

About the size of two TGM pages, it will have no keyboard, and will load software from cassette at about 2K per second – so it will take some six minutes to fill its RAM.

The operating system, held permanently in the machine's 128K ROM, will be based on CP/M.

Sight and sound

On the visual front, the Flare One will have 128K of video RAM, onboard Genlock-style computer/video image overlays and a high-resolution definition of 512 x 256 pixels, though only 256 colours.

Sound output will be in stereo. A full complement of MIDI ports and a built-in analogue-to-digital converter, enabling samples to be taken, will be included.

Software bundle

Three software packages are likely to be included in the price: one graphics and two sound utilities, controlled by icons and windows.

FlarePaint will be a straightforward art program, although a frame-grabbing facility (a video digitiser) may be included.

FlareSynth will be a voice editor, controlled by altering graph shapes and with user-friendly commands.

And *FlareCompose*, for writing music, will be fully MIDI-compatible and able to incorporate samples.

Analysis: good luck!

After the recent arrival of the PC Engine, the games console world has reached its second stage. There's a strong possibility that the Sega and Nintendo will take the budget seat – they're now at £79.95 to £129.95 and £129.95 to £189.95 respectively – while the Flare One and PC Engine become state-of-the-art games machines.

And Flare Technology are in a position to rival even the Commodore Amiga and Atari ST if a Flare with 3.5" disk drive is produced – as is planned for later models. An IBM-standard port will allow users to attach a keyboard easily.

The Flare One clearly could beat the ST hands down on the music front, too.

But first Flare Technology need a manufacturer. With most of the established home computer firms – Acorn, Amstrad, Atari and Commodore – committed to their own 16-bit machines, support from them seems unlikely. Perhaps a company from outside the micro area could step in, as happened when NEC took the PC Engine under their wing.

Let's hope the Flare three succeed. At £200, with a stunning software bundle, their machine could make the 16-bit revolution a dud.

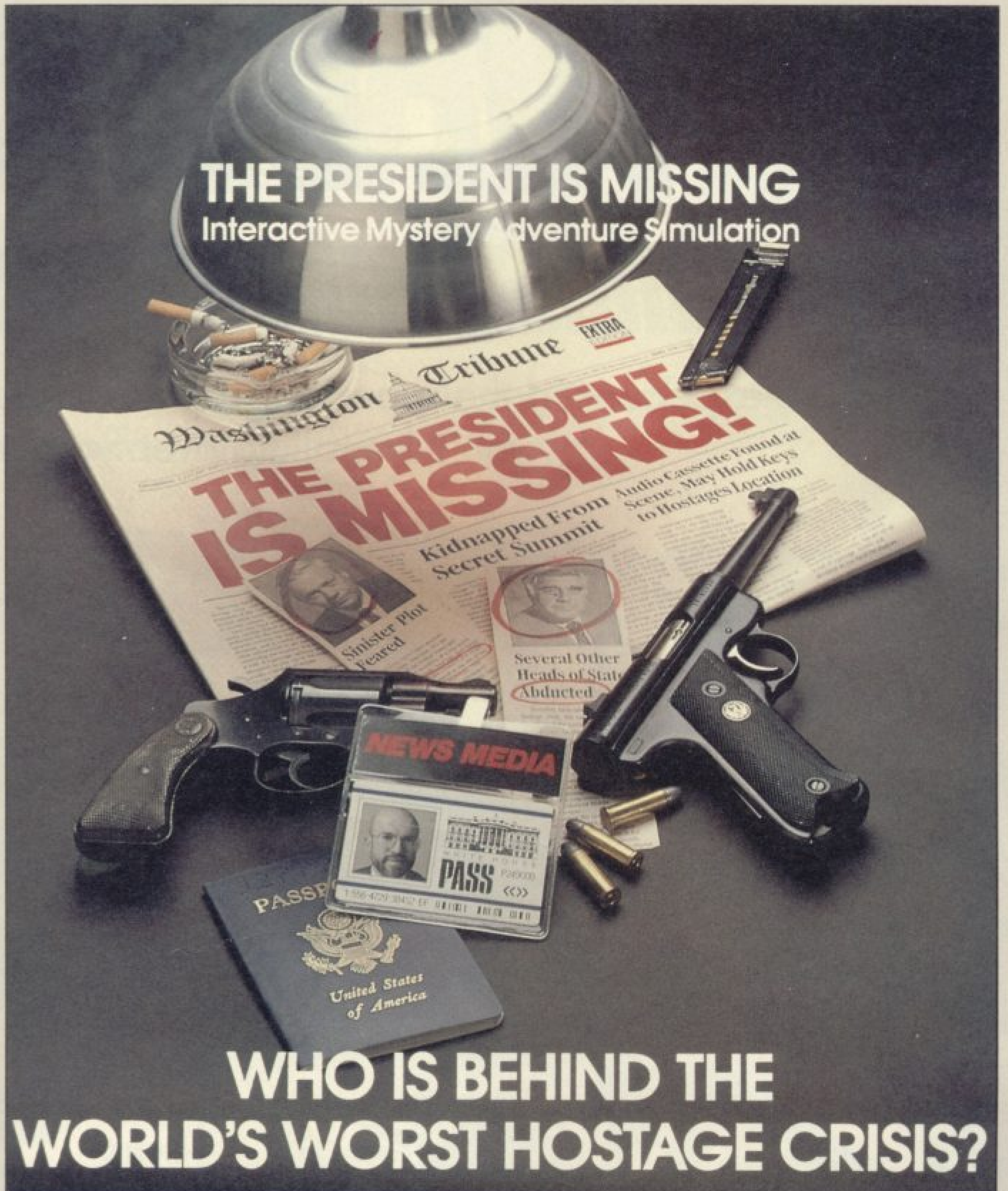
Together in electric dreams: Anglia TV hope to give five million viewers a bad time again with a new series of Knightmare, their TV adventure game using a mixture of computer graphics and live players. Knightmare, featured in TGM001, goes back to the onscreen dungeons on September 5.



Words are cheap . . . at least where Database Software are concerned. Their new *Mini Office Personal* package for IBM PC-compatibles includes a word processor, database, spreadsheet, label printer and comms software at just £29.95. Says the software house's head, Derek Meakin: 'We looked first at what new users wanted, then wrote the product.' Says TGM: this dangerous trend should be **stopped**.

Better dead than alien? American scientist Mark Carlotto believes there's a man on Mars – thanks to computer graphics. Photos taken by the 1976 Viking space probe revealed a three-kilometre-wide face-like shape on the planet's surface, but sceptics said it was a **trick of the light**. So Carlotto fed details of the unusual rock formation into his computer at Analytic Sciences in Boston, Massachusetts, and recreated the view from several different angles. Results, according to *Applied Optics* magazine: 'a second eye socket may be present . . . fine structure in the mouth suggests teeth are apparent . . . they may not be natural'. Well, we could do with some **intelligent life** around here.

Stop the presses: We nearly had to, just to tell you that **Software Horizons**, a new house specialising in 16-bit games, are to make their debut this autumn at the PC Show (Stand 2545). They'll have three original ST and Amiga titles developed by Paradox Software: *Veteran*, *Luxor* and *Mafdet*, priced at a modest £14.95 and bridging the **grey area** between budget and full-price. For more information on the show you could turn to our 24-page . . . well, it's hardly the **time or place** to go into that.



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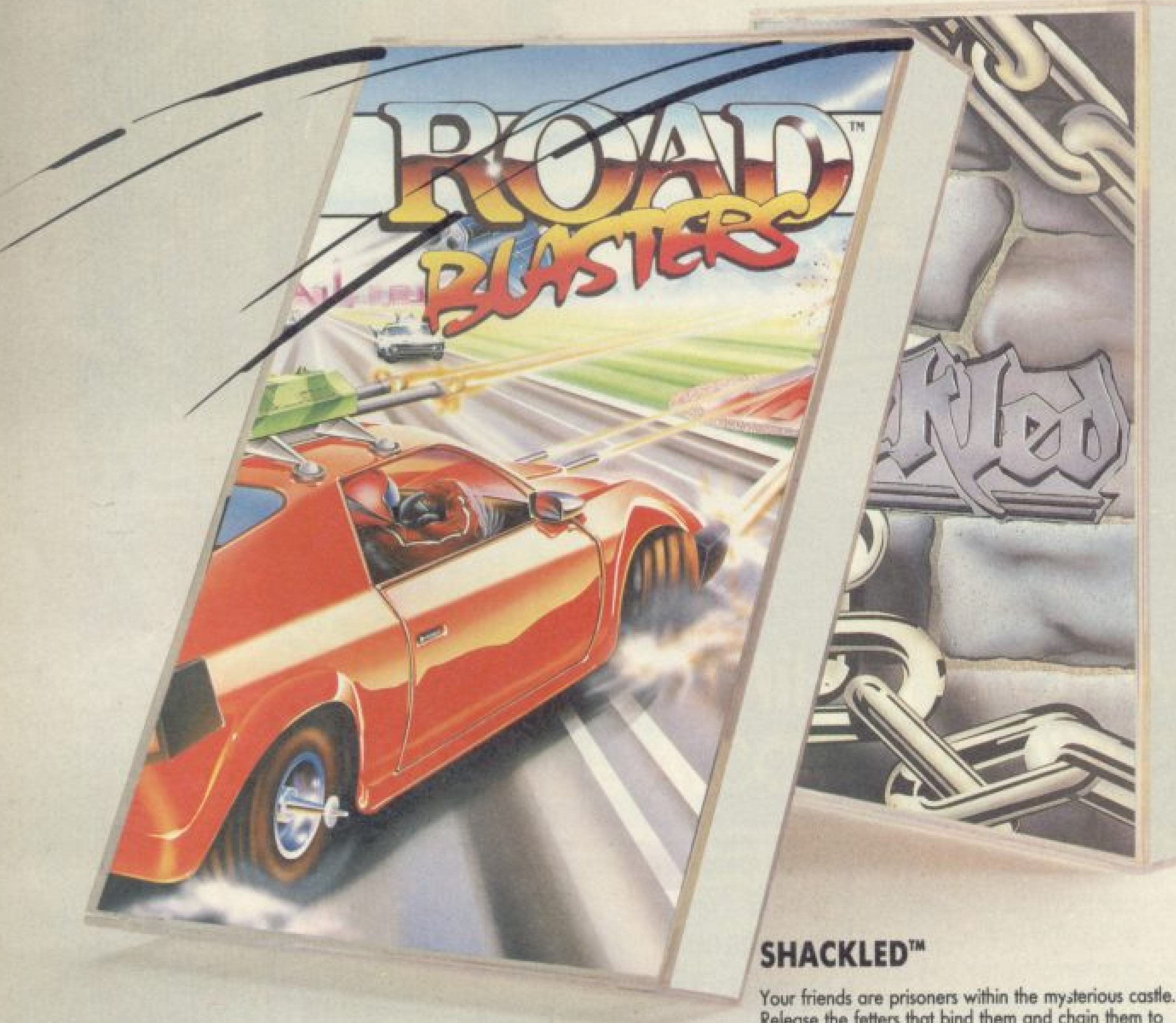
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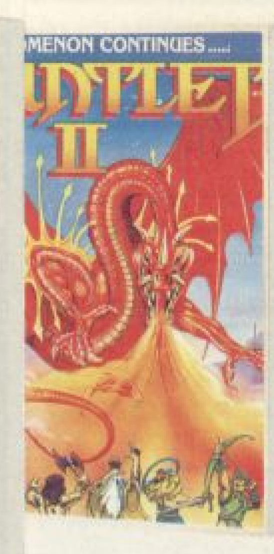
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the rest will be irresistible

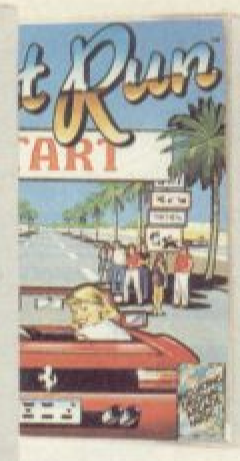
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STICK A DECKCHAIR UP YOUR NOSE

Your starter for ten. What do black leather suits, new beginnings, speed boats and rubber latex have in common? The answer lies with Dominic Wheatley of Domark: 'They're all absolutely brilliant bits from four future Domark games.' There you go . . .

'Absolutely brilliant' is a phrase often heard around the Wimbledon offices of **Domark**, one of the few independent, fun companies left in the industry, and a phrase Domark people continually apply to the four new games set for launch throughout the autumn/winter period. The quartet consists of: ***Return Of The Jedi*, *Live And Let Die*, *Trivial Pursuit Genus 2 – A New Beginning*** and the official ***Spitting Image*** game.

Return Of The Jedi is the final part of the *Star Wars* trilogy taken from the series of Atari coin-ops. Unlike its two predecessors (*Star Wars* (TGM**005**, 78%) and *The Empire Strikes Back* (TGM**009**, 89%) which both featured fast animated vector graphics, ***Jedi*** relies on solid sprites.

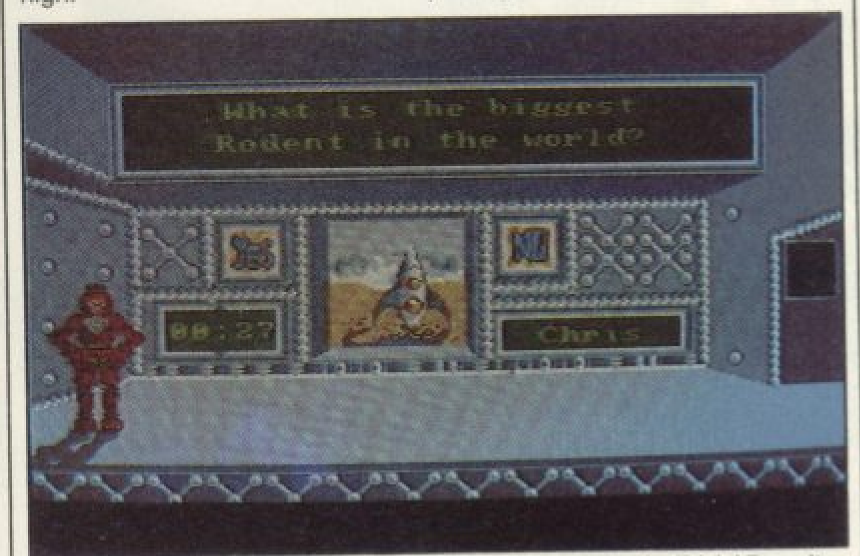
In four sections, *Jedi* begins with a race through the forest of Endor. The screen scrolls diagonally, with the player seated upon a speedbike in competition with a similarly-mounted Stormtrooper squad. Avoiding trees and fallen logs requires nifty joystick control, and fire-button pumping is needed all the way to kill off opposition.


Take the controls of the walker for Section 2 of Return Of The Jedi

In the second part you are in control of a Walker, while in the third section you find yourself in the relative safety of the Millenium Falcon guiding it through a barrage of Imperial Star Destroyers. Finally you head into the Death Star and tackle the tunnels, heading for the reactor to blow it sky high.

Anyone for Triv?

Another big success for Domark was *Trivial Pursuit*. Released more than two years ago, 250,000 units were sold. Domark also produced *Young Player* editions and *Baby Boomer* question packs, and they're hoping to repeat the success with ***Trivial Pursuit Genus 2 – A New Beginning***. 'However I didn't just want to do *Genus 2* straight from the board,' explains Company Director **Dominic Wheatley**. 'It would stretch the *TP* idea just too far after the high penetration the computer game had when it was originally released.'



A new beginning for Trivial Pursuit Genus II *on the Amstrad*



Scenery whizzes past at alarming speed in Section 1 of Return Of The Jedi – *Atari ST*

Instead they approached **Horn Abbot** (creators of the original boardgame) with their own idea and they agreed. 'So,' adds Dominic with one of his modestly winning smiles, '***TP 2*** is a new beginning.'

Although it still relies heavily on the trivia questions and answers, the game is very much orientated towards the possibilities offered by creating ***TP 2*** on computer. The story line tells of Earth – a dying planet – and of how, in the search for survival, a select few fly through space to reach the planet Genus 2, where the human race can begin again.

To qualify for a flight ticket all prospective players must answer a trivia question. Then it's off to Genus 2, passing through six galaxies from which six trivial objects need to be collected. Each galaxy is made up of 50 planets consisting of questions from six

Enough To Make You Spit

Back on your TV screens this autumn is the return of *Spitting Image* – the satirical rubber latex show featuring Fluck and Law's puppets. The show's makers have recruited a new script-writing team, because they felt the previous scripts didn't work as well as the puppets. To coincide with this announcement Domark are in the early stages of developing the official ***Spitting Image*** computer game.

It's planned to be a crazy combat game with six prominent figures out to take over the world for their own particular reasons. The player, by pitting one leader against another, must attempt to eliminate each one, thereby saving us all. The world leaders featured are The Pope, Maggie Thatcher, Prince Charles, Gorbachev, Ronnie Reagan and PW Botha.

The graphics are currently being worked on by *Spitting Image* artists, who are faithfully recreating their characters on the computer screen. Each leader will be suitably animated and enjoy (?) the same distinct features shown on the TV show. Mrs Thatcher will be there in her suit, cigar-stabbing opponents, and Prince Charles will slaps cheeks with flowers.

Spitting Image – The Computer Game is planned for Christmas. We'll be looking at the game again, and including screen shots just to see what the artists have managed to achieve. Until then . . . Hold a chicken in the air, stick a deckchair up your nose . . .

***Domark's Mark Strachan (left) and Dominic Wheatley (right) surrounded by the cast of* Spitting Image**



categories and six trivial objects. There's no way of knowing which planet, in which galaxy, holds each particular object or question category, although the planets' names may provide clues. The game is hosted by a series of aliens who provide comments on each player's performance.

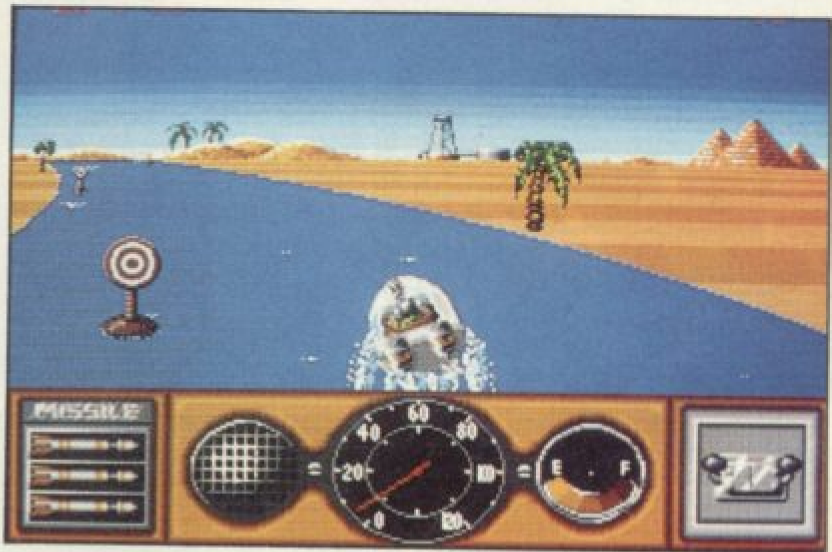
Trivial Pursuit Genus 2 – A New Beginning is due to appear on all major machines, both 8- and 16-bit, although the latter will feature superior sound and graphics, more variety and state-of-the-art animation.

Project 5 *from Firebird, unless they change their minds and call it something else – Amstrad*





Live And Let Die*: Very wet Mr Bond, but not wet enough – Commodore screen*



Target shooting in level one of* Live And Let Die *– ST screen

Live and let hype

It's taken an age for Domark to finalise the deal for ***Live And Let Die***, another licence in their James Bond series. Written by **Elite Systems**, it is taken from the film's speedboat scene.

Live and Let Die runs through three playing levels and a practice section as you take 007's boat up the Norwegian fjords, through the Gulf, and eventually to the jungles of South America.

Throughout, Bond faces a host of enemies, also in speed boats, who are out to kill him. The rivers are clogged by the logs flowing down them which need to be avoided, and there are fuel barrels to collect.

Out in a month or two for Spectrum 48/128, Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64/128, Atari ST and Amiga, we are assured it will be 'absolutely brilliant'.

IN PRODUCTION

Okay, hands up, what's the best shoot-'em-up on the Commodore 64? *Uridium, Sanxion, Delta* . . . ? Nah, all wrong, it is in fact ***Armalyte*** – the brand new extravaganza of mayhem from **Thalamus**.

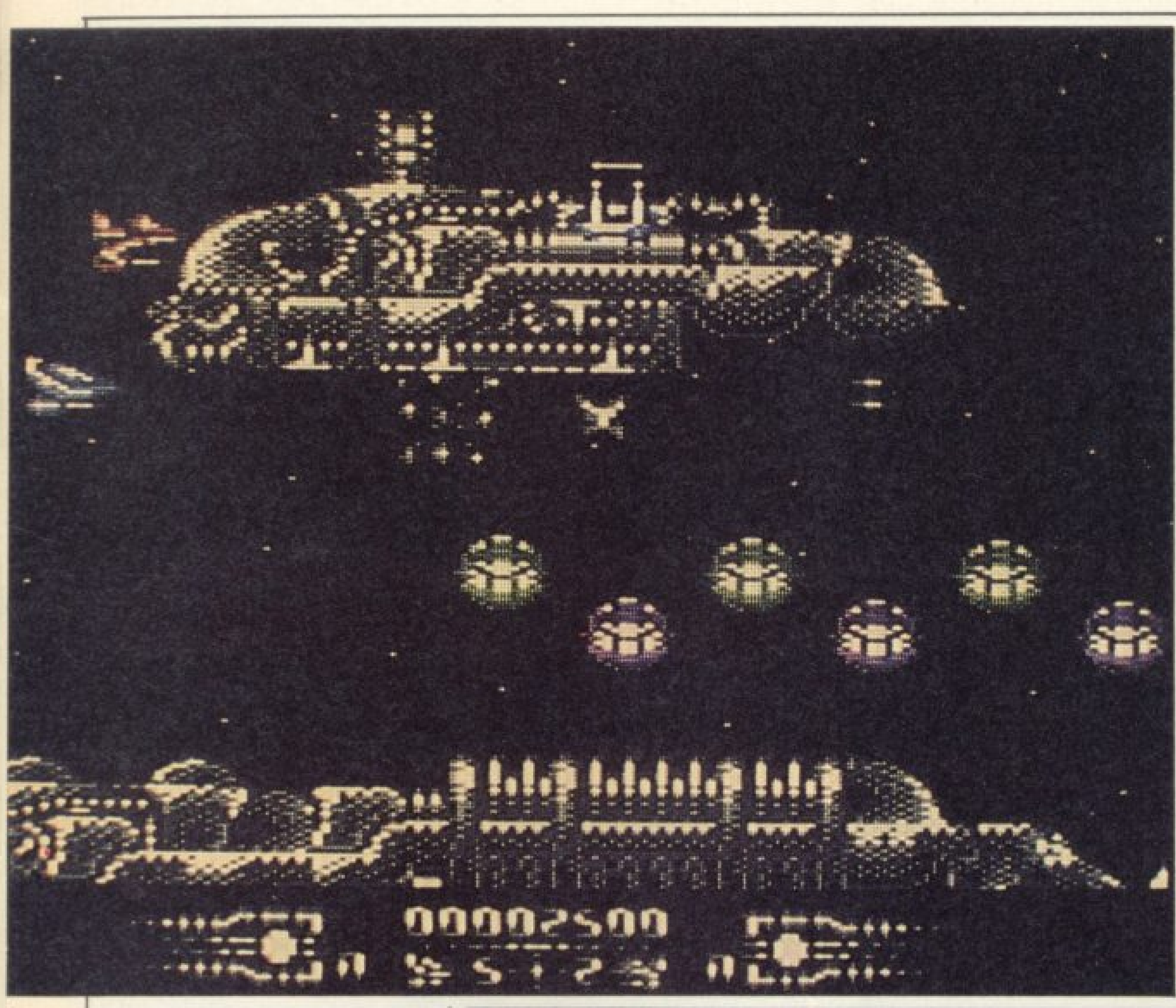
Armalyte is written by **Cybadyne Systems** and currently features eight levels of horizontally scrolling action. ***Armalyte*** is a one- or two-player game, and takes the player beyond *Delta* into a mysterious region of space infested with beautifully-drawn aliens and spacecraft. The alien forces appear in waves and vary in speed, size and direction. Additional firepower is collected through the game.

The two-player controlled ships are coloured red and blue, and flashing crystals found floating in space provide the additional firepower. ***Armalyte*** will be released for the Commodore 64/128 in September.

The programming team **Probe Software** have an arcade combat game currently scheduled for Christmastime. It's working title is ***Project 5***, though releasing company **Firebird** inform us that this is likely to be changed to something a bit more hard-hitting.

Project 5 has three levels. The first has the large animated your hero figure bounding through a horizontally scrolling tunnel network under attack from various

PRESS ANY KEY





Beyond the black hole of Delta danger lies in Armalyte – *Commodore screen*

opponents. To combat the foes you are armed with an unlimited supply of axes but more powerful weapons can be found and used.

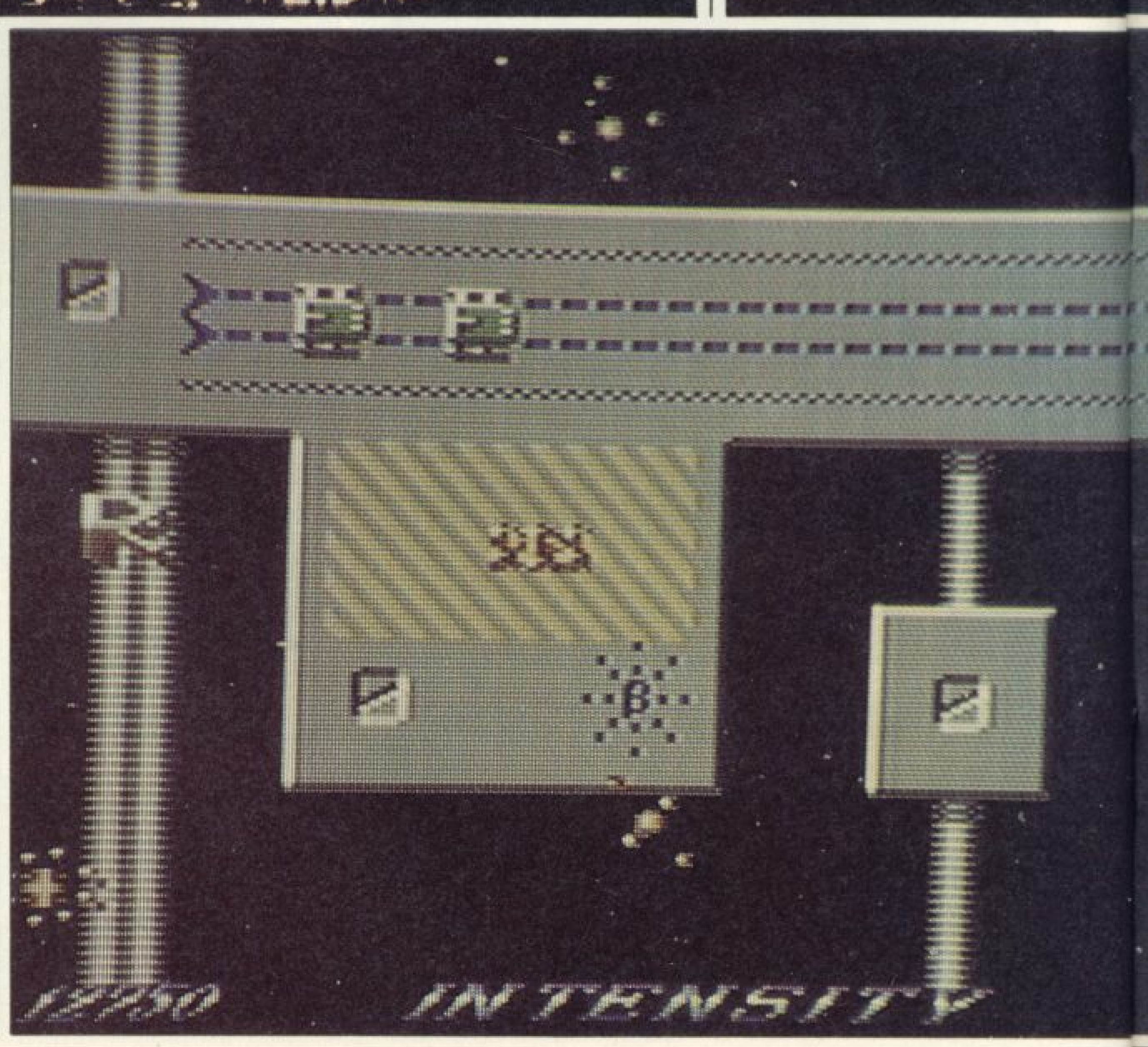
The second sections works in a similar way to *Space Harrier*, with the landscape hurtling toward you at great speed. We've seen Levels 1 and 2 on the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum 48/128 and the graphics look very impressive, especially on the Spectrum where an astonishing amount of colour has been used.

Also looming from **Firebird** is a new Spectrum 48/128 and Commodore 64/128 shoot-'em-up from **Andrew Braybrook**, author of the classics *Paradroid, Uridium* and *Morpheus. **Intensity*** features the Terran Exploration Company is an organisation set up to seek out new civilisations, new planets and lifeforms and to boldly go. . . . (*That's enough Star Trek* –**Ed.**)

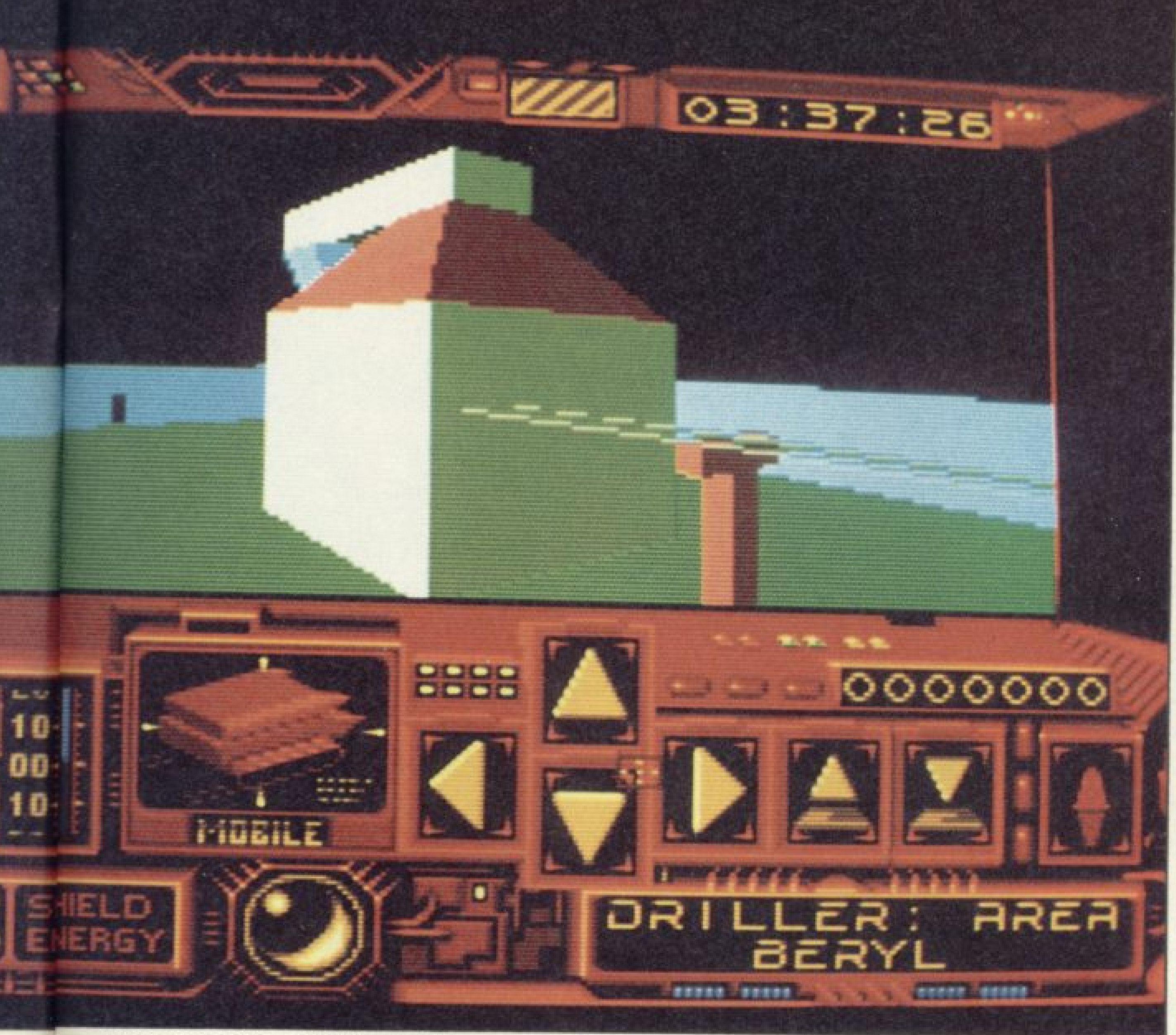
Anyway Terran's space station is under attack from hostile alien forces from which the Terran colonists flee, leaving you to deal with the problem.

Your objective is to wipe out the invaders by skimming the station's surface obliterating aliens and picking up the few stranded colonists. ***Intensity*** has a release date of September 29 for both formats.

ST owners should be pleased with the news that Firebird's con-



Andrew Braybrook's latest blaster on the Commodore 64/128 – Intensity



Tackle 16-bit Beryl in Driller *– Amiga*

version of the classic strategy/arcade game ***Elite*** is on the launch pad almost ready for take off. ***Elite*** now features solid, speedy 3-D graphics and a visually more exciting dashboard. Unfortunately on the preview version the sound effects and *Blue Danube* theme were rather weak, though Firebird say they are seeking to improve the quality.

Drill Routine

Driller is back in town, or at least it will be in October when **Incentive Software** release the long awaited Atari ST and Amiga versions. Retailing at £24.95, the 16-bit ***Driller***s are a great improvement over the original 8-bit games (TGM002 95%).

Incentive promise a lot of new problems and fast movement. As Incentive's **Ian Andrew** explains: 'The speed has had a strange effect on the way the 16-bit versions have been developed. The game is now far less concerned with the strategy/adventure aspect and now appears more like an arcade game. The two versions are practically identical, though the Amiga version is planned to incorporate additional and better sound effects and music than the Atari ST.'

For Christmas Incentive have announced news of ***Total Eclipse***. Set in Egypt, it will feature FREESCAPE 2, an enhanced routine which programming team **Major Developments** have been working on.

Also making use of ST and Amiga capabilities is ***Siege On London*** from CRL's new label **Actual Screenshots**. Written by **Paul Holmes** (it's his first game), the game is based entirely in London in a science fiction situation. Earth has been invaded and London is the home base for all incoming aliens. The game's playing area is huge, based on scale map of London with all the major landmarks and streets. Graphics are shown in solid 3-D as you stalk the streets in a desperate bid to destroy all enemy lifeforms.

Also from Actual Screenshots is the comic gladiator game ***I, Ludicrus***. Ludicrus is star of the show which is drenched in slapstick humour. Planned for a 16-bit release to make use of animation and graphic effects ***I, Ludicrus*** comes from the programming talent of **Jools Bert**, author of *Black Shadow*, with sound effects by **Jon Law**. CRL attempted a similar idea with the 8-bit *Ninja Hamster* last year, but the humour faded after a few plays. We'll see whether the problem has been rectified in ***I, Ludicrus***.

Driving ambition

In the future the ambition of every child is not to be a fireman or a nurse it is, in fact, to become the driver of a Powerdromo XXIV at a Powerdrome race circuit. Get a chance to experience the thrills and spills of this breakneck racing simulation when **Electronic Arts** reveal ***Powerdrome*** for the Atari ST and Amiga. Programmed by **Michael Powell**, ***Powerdrome*** is the first original game written in the UK for Electronic Arts.

Featuring fast-moving graphics, you can race round the Powerdrome circuit in practice mode or attempt the full Powerdrome session of six races. Powerdrome tracks are situated on different planets, and each planet naturally has its own atmospheric conditions requiring adjustment of your craft to achieve optimum performance.

While racing, you view the control panel and the course ahead. The racing season commences with a practice session where you adjust the air brakes, aerofoil sensitivity, fuel selection and engine. A qualifying race determines the best position for the start of the race.

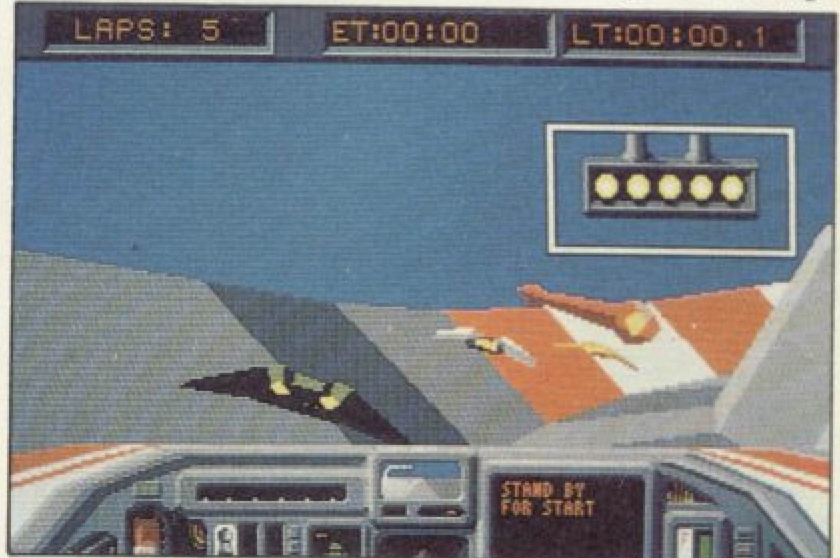
Robopits are on hand for automatic repairs in case you meet any nasty hazards in the tunnels, on the humps or around the sharp bends dislodge bits. ***Powerdrome*** for the ST should be available in late-September, with the Amiga version appearing in November.

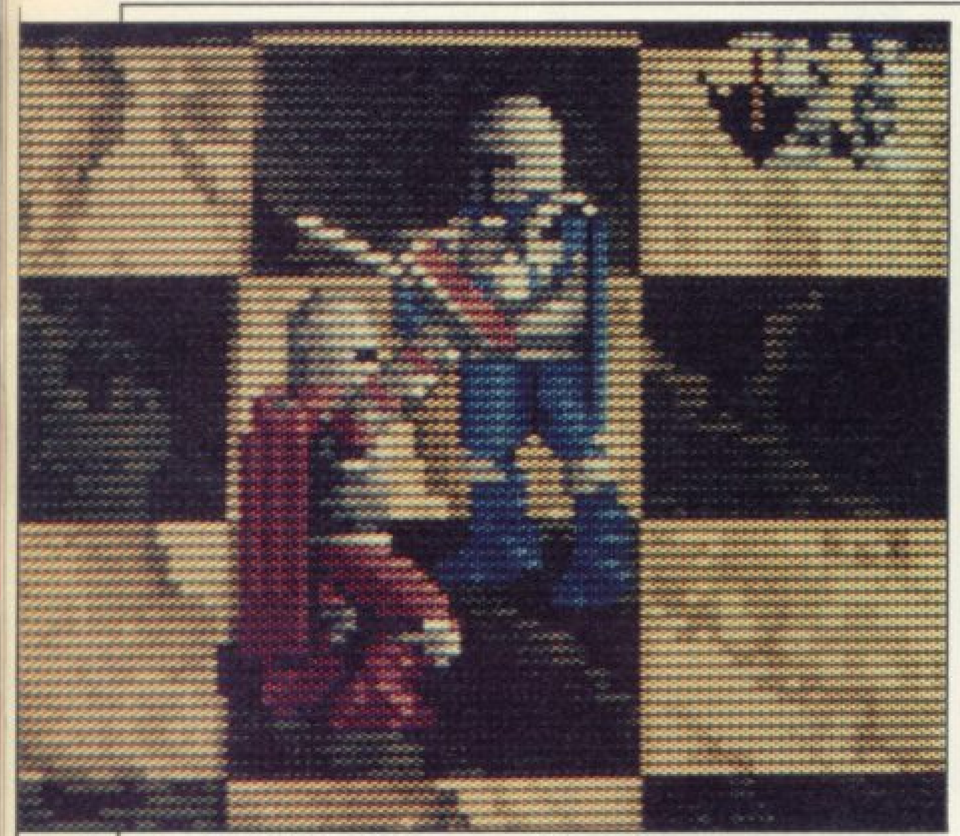
Electronic Arts bill their late-August release ***Empire*** as 'Wargame of the Century'. ***Empire***, written by **Interstel** (an American software development house), is a strategic simulation of global conflict and empire building. Multiple difficulty levels and millions of different worlds to conquer provide hours of entertaining decision making, they say. Sounds meaty.

Save parliament from invaders in Siege On London *– Amiga screen*



Racing round the Powerdrome in Electronic Arts's latest game for the Amiga





Close up on the pieces featured in Battle Chess – Amiga

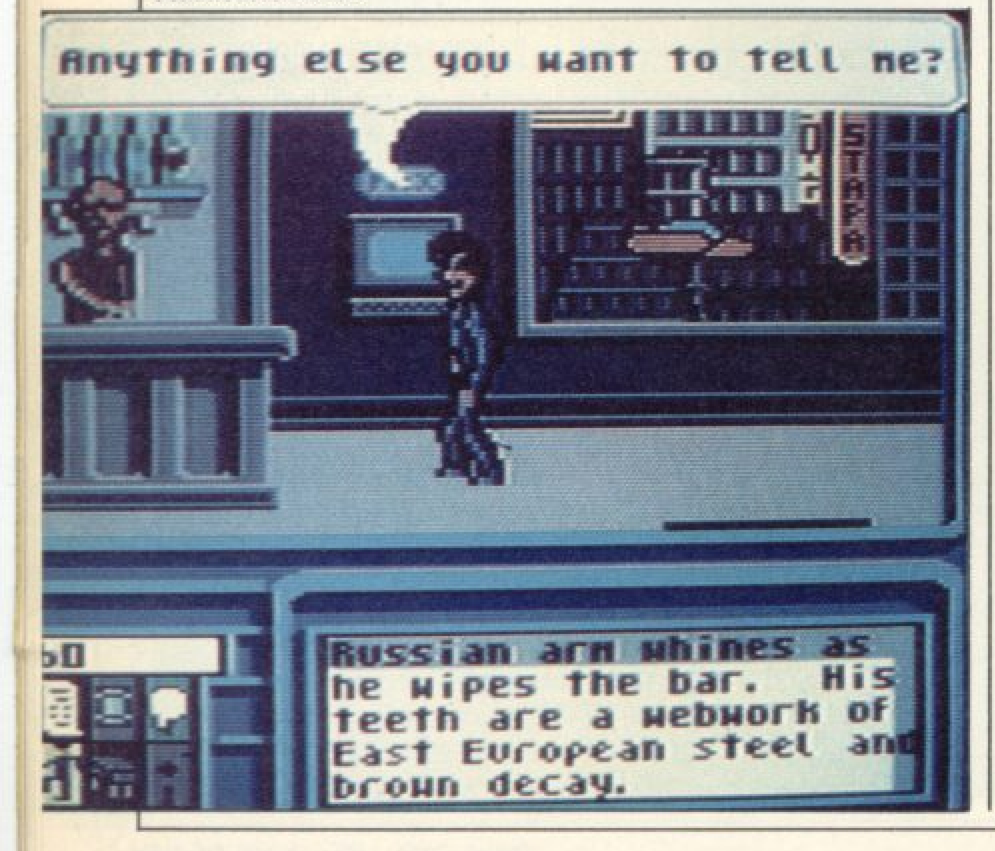
Bashing your bishop

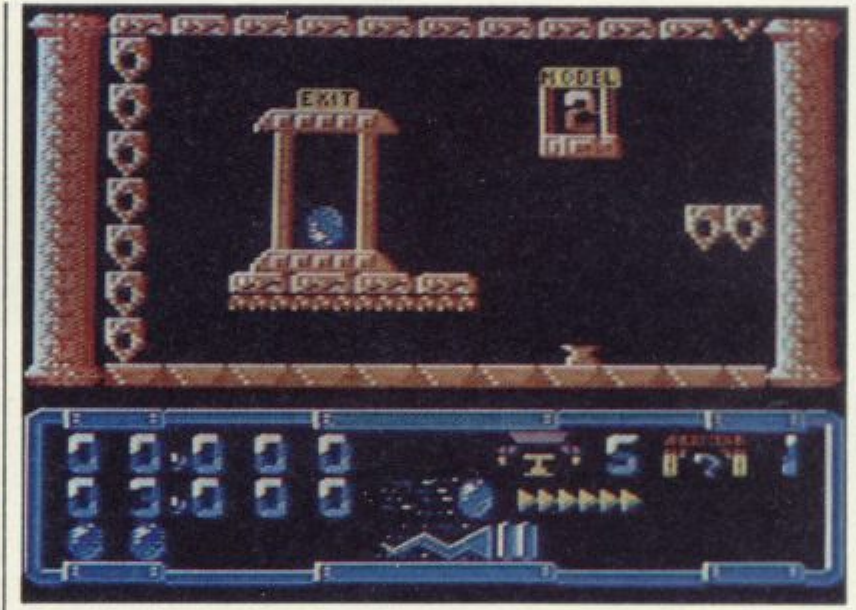
Still more from Electronic Arts: ***Battle Chess*** comes to Amiga screens in September. It's a traditional chess game; Electronic Arts claim it ranks with some of the best. However, it has a twist – each playing piece has its own personality and when they meet on the board they enter into conflict. ***Battle Chess*** has four megabytes of animation and 400K of digitised sound. It can be played as a 3-D animated overview or, for computers, the more traditional 2-D view. there are 10 levels of play and an opening library of 30,000 moves. Written by independent US software house **Interplay**, the Amiga version will damage your American Express card by £24.95, as will the PC version planned to follow in November.

Cyberpunk fans should be pleased to hear that Electronic Arts are releasing ***Neuromancer*** – the computer game taken from the **William Gibson** SF novel which has so occupied TGM's Stewart Wynne of late.

Set in Japan in the 21st century, the world has been hooked up to a huge computer system where information on everything is available. You become a futuristic, deadly hacker, breaking into the system to acquire information intent on becoming a dominant force in the world. ***Neuromancer*** incorporates a digitised soundtrack from well-known US band **Devo**, and it's planned for release first on Commodore 64/128 disk at £14.95 with other versions to follow.

Asking for information in the first cyberpunk game Neuromancer – Commodore 64/128





One of the chambers from GrandSlam's Power Pyramids – Commodore 64/128

Egyptian enterprise

The ***Power Pyramids*** competition in this issue offers you the chance to win a holiday in Egypt – so check that out. But before you do that, take a look at the preview screen shot on the Commodore 64/128. The game's theme is to bounce a ball around 128 chambers of four pyramids collecting power to activate them. We'll be taking a full look at the finished product for Commodore 64/128 and Spectrum formats next issue.

In last month's TGM Previews we mentioned ***Gary Lineker's Super Skills***, a training program with three sections – gym training, ball control and pitch tactics. Didn't come in though, so a review next month on all formats.



PUNCH DRUNK

MELBOURNE HOUSE have signed up the rights to convert ***Double Dragon*** from the Taito coin-op on to Spectrum, Commodore 64/128, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST, Amiga and IBM formats. It's the sequel to the excellent smash-'em-up *Renegade*, and follows roughly the same plot: girlie gets beaten up by a bunch of down-town putzes, gets kidnapped and boyfriend goes on the rampage to seek revenge. Only this time he takes his mate along too, so it becomes a two-player game. Written by **Binary Design**, it features the painful moves of the arcade game, elbow-to-eye, knee-to-groin etc.

In the many street scenes there are gangs providing three or four opponents and a superputz. You bash your way through the levels until finally you reach Putz HQ where your girlie is being help captive. It gets tough from here on: you can face up to six putzes at once.

The scenery on most levels is interactive. You can climb walls, throw rocks and even push people down potholes.

When released in the arcades a year ago, it met with resounding success. TGM is offering you the chance to win the arcade machine game next month in the first of our **Superdeal Offers**. We'll be offering TGM readers the chance of being one of the first people to buy the game at a specially reduced price, and you are automatically entered for the prize draw, top prize of the arcade ***Double Dragon*** game. Stay tuned for next month's full details.

An early development screen from Double Dragon – Amiga



NETHERWORLD

Netherworld, another time another place, created from the deep dark subconscious of the mind where the forces of good and evil are locked in eternal combat. Trapped in the fantasy world the only way back is through battle and bribery.

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CONNING THE COMPUTER

This year, money stolen by computerised fraud will exceed cash robberies from banks, parked cars, houses and mugger's victims for the first time ever. The computerised thief is a brand new breed of criminal who may look just like your local bank manager. This, gentle reader, could well be because he is your local bank manager.

The attractions of electronic robbery are pretty obvious. First you are not going to get your head bashed in or have a bullet pumped into you by a zealous cop. Second no video security camera is going to record your face and no witness is going to pick you out in a line up. Third, you don't need a look-out, a get-away driver, a safe cracker or some guy who looks like a gorilla. Fourth, you don't need a bent dealer to fence your loot. Fifth, if you have the hardware, you can commit your robbery from home if there's nothing much on TV that night. Sixth, and by no means last, you'll probably get away with it. Out of 791 cases investigated by the **Computer Crime Squad** (a non-publicised branch of the Metropolitan Police, but what the hell, maybe they can do with the publicity) only 240 computerised criminals have been summoned or charged.

Computerised bank robbery

The first Great Computerised Bank Robbery happened in 1978, and the thief managed to nick $10.2 million by using a public phone box! Stanley Rifkin was a computer consultant to a Los Angeles bank, who tricked the bank staff who knew him into revealing the computer codes needed to transfer cash electronically. He then went to that famous phone box and transformed himself not into Superman, but Super Branch Manager, and coolly sent over ten million dollars to a Swiss Bank account. Then he hopped on a plane to Switzerland and converted his loot into Russian diamonds. The bank didn't even notice the robbery, and Rifkin was only caught because he couldn't help boasting to his lawyer, who called in the cops. Even then, the bank denied the theft, and had to be persuaded into running a computer check before they realised the enormity of the rip off.

Since 1978, banks have been terrified of computer crime. They know it's happening, sometimes they even know how it's happening, but they cannot stop it. Twenty-one million dollars was heisted from the Wells Fargo National Bank back in 1981, and when details of the computerised scam got out, hundreds of copycat thefts happened all over the world.

Here's how it works: a computer operations manager deposits some non-existent cash at one branch of the bank. Next she credits this deposit to a different branch, safe in the knowledge that bank computers take *five days* to flag an anomaly. So she makes another transaction to conceal the previous one, using her terminal to produce the 'genuine' paperwork. The process is repeated every couple of days, for increasing sums of money, and several more accounts are opened including some tax havens like the Channel Islands, Andorra, Switzerland. Some of these accounts are personal but some are in the names of limited companies. On average, after about two years the scam is discovered by accident, usually after a clerical error prompts an inquiry into one of the accounts. By this time the computer manager has retired to her tax haven, loaded with real money whose source is completely untraceable. Alchemists tried to make gold out of old iron for hundreds of years, but only now can computers create illegal riches out of thin air. Brown trousers are being issued to bank managers at this very moment!

Even if you get caught, the bank is not necessarily going to bang you to rights. In August 1985, a London bank employee diverted the first ten electronic bank transfers of the day into his Swiss account. He did this by accessing the bank's front-end processor and simply changing the payment codes. When he got nicked he didn't turn a hair, but offered to return half the dosh if the bank dropped all charges against him. He also offered to explain how he had operated the scam. The Bank agreed. This may surprise you, until I reveal that the first ten transactions of the day amounted to six million quid!

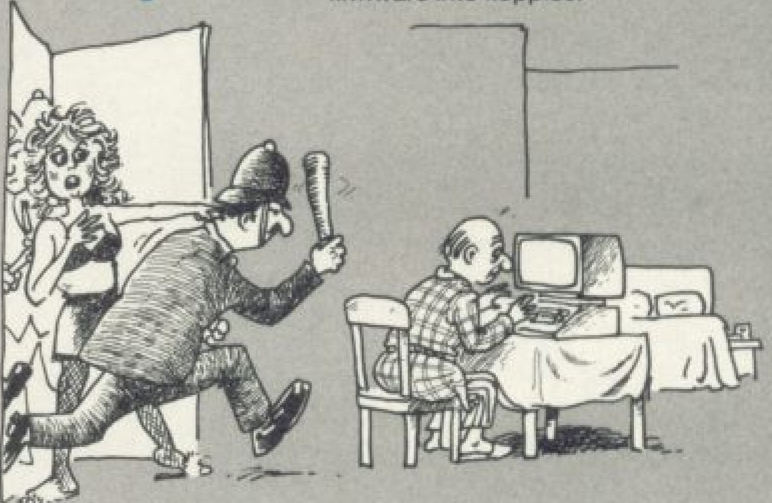
In the same month, a Swiss branch of well-known British highstreet bank copped a telex from the Director General of the National Bank of Columbia, asking for $13.5 million in cash. The money vanished, it simply disappeared into a black hole, via a bank in Florida. Latest information suggests that this sort of thing is happening all the time, but the bank's ain't shouting about it, after all they don't want their customers to get jittery, do they? The same information says it's possible for a major company robbery in the Californian banking system to hit the world economy within seven days of the heist.

"Alchemists tried to make gold out of old iron, now computers create illegal riches out of thin air"

"The bank didn't even notice, and Rifkin was caught because he couldn't help boasting to his lawyer"

The most interesting bit of information I have dug up states that computer-literate kids are deliberately opting for careers in banking, with the sole intention of ripping the bank off! Maybe this is why: the chances of getting away with electronic bank robbery are increasing all the time, not decreasing. A thief who gets caught illegally transferring funds by computer has only a 15% chance of being prosecuted, 85% get the charges dropped in exchange for telling the bank how they pulled off the scam. Even if they do get prosecuted, the average conviction at time of writing is only *five months*!

Do you know how most people get caught out in their electronic skullduggery? By accident! 51% of computerised robberies are only discovered by some bright spark casually checking a lump of data, or a discarded bit of printout. Another 19% get copped by annual audits out by accountants, and only a pitiful 10% come to light through management controls. That leaves 20% folks, and this little revelation should send a shiver down quite a few spines, not to mention some rather more intimate spots. According to the Computer Law and Security Report of October 1987, no less than 20% of electronic fraudsters get shopped by spurned mistresses or boyfriends, out for revenge. I bet that's turned some firmware into floppies.



"Last year, there were over 190 million major computerised thefts"

In 1983 the average computerised bank robbery netted £33,000. By 1986 the average haul had increased to over a quarter of million quid. Last year, there were over 190 million major computerised thefts, but the banks are unwilling to put a figure on their losses, surprise, surprise! American data puts the figure around £850,000 a shot.

Let me tell you my favourite techno-bank robbery of all time, which was carried out by a three-year-old American girl. Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin. Once upon a time, the vice president of a big fat bank took his work home for the weekend. He linked up his domestic computer to the bank's

mainframe, farted about with it for an hour or two and then took his wife out for din-dins, leaving the machine switched on. His infant daughter had no trouble at all in persuading the babysitter that Pop didn't mind if she played with the bitty buttons on the keyboard, and they watched lots of twinkly numbers flashing all over the screen until it was time for beddy-byes. The following Monday morning the bank was bust! The three-year-old had succeeded in transferring its entire assets to unknown destinations. Ha!

Cash dispenser con-merchants

In 1985, a cash dispenser fraud was uncovered in the USA. The thieves got away with (are you ready for this?) $450 million.

Some entrepreneurs are a bit more modest though, like the 16-year-old Australian who extracted $40,000 from cash dispensers during the summer of 1985. This young gent was a home micro fanatic, who worked out something very simple. For one hour before dawn, the mainframe controlling all of a bank's cash dispensers goes off-line to batch-process yesterday's records, so it cannot check out a customer's account to get cash balances during this time. So what he did was to open 40 savings accounts in fake names and addresses and get his mates organised. Round about 4am on July 15, his gang set about emptying every cash dispenser owned by the Hotham Building Society in several nearby towns and drew the maximum amount of each one until that dispenser had been cleaned out.

They knew they were safe simply by making an account inquiry from the machine, and waiting to be told that the information was not available (in other words that the mainframe was off-line). So far police have recovered £32,000 and an airline ticket, but the bad news is that they have uncovered four hundred other similar cases. The even worse news is that the building societies and banks involved are having great difficulty in proving any crime! If you use the appropriate card and customer Personal Identification Number, then the machine is programmed to legally hand over the dosh!

Some fellow Australians have also worked out that cash dispensers are less likely to call the cops than their human equivalents, but set about things in a slightly less subtle fashion. Following the Crocodile Dundee Charm School Method, Australian bank robbers got away with the most direct cash dispenser theft of all time. They nicked £40,000 by ramming the wall of their chosen bank with a JCB, picked up the cash dispenser in its iron jaws and drove away. Not very sophisticated, but highly effective!

Mind you, if you don't want to involve a gang of your friends, or go to the trouble of hijacking an earth-moving machine, there is another option: you can always make your own credit cards! The machine costs a little less than a thousand quid, and was successfully used last year by an ex-repairman of, you guessed it, cash dispensers! All he did was to watch a customer enter their Personal Identification Number, which is not too difficult as the numbers consist of only four digits, and control pads can be read from several paces away. Whenever a bimbo was foolish enough to throw away the transaction receipt, chummy would simply pick it up to discover that customer's account number. So now our man had an account number, a code number, and all he needed was a cash card. No problem. Back home, he stamped out little blank rectangles of plastic with a magnetic strip on their backsides, and encoded the 'valid' data on them. The bank knew something was wrong as soon as customers arrived furious at having their accounts debited, and they even managed to catch our man once by a very clever piece of programming, but at time of writing he's jumped bail and is no doubt relieving some poor soul of their savings at this very moment.

"Credit card frauds are on the increase, and you can get nailed simply by answering your phone"

Would you credit it?

And here is another word of warning to anyone reading this with a pocket full of plastic. Credit card frauds are on the increase, and you can get nailed simply by answering your phone. One gang has been operating the following scam to the tune of $2 million: they call you up to say that you've won a free trip to Hawaii because you are the holder of a lucky number Mastercard or Visa Card, beginning with the number five. (All Mastercard numbers begin with a five, dumbo!) You confirm your wholenumber, along with the expiry date of your card, and the swindlers promptly use the various telemarketing systems to bill you for orders from fake businesses. Your bank, by law, has to pay up. By the time you discover the rip off, which is usually a modest hundred dollars or so, the fake businesses have cleared their accounts and disappeared.

You wouldn't fall for that? Well, if you own a credit card I am prepared to bet that you've fallen for this one. You pay for a restaurant meal by Access or whatever slice of plastic you happen to use, the bill is written correctly, and you sign the payment slip. But the waiter has left the little 'total amount' square blank, and a 'tip' can be added on after you have gone home. You only lose a quid or two at a time, and either you don't notice when your monthly statement arrives, or you can't remember the exact amount anyway.

"Neat little packages programmed computers to cook the books for the taxman and VAT inspector"

It was a slip of memory that got a 35-year-old Frenchman charged with gross computer fraud. He was working as a programmer for the Swedish Stock Exchange in 1986, when he brilliantly diverted over four million quid of Volvo's stock into a hastily opened bank account of his very own. The loot was supposed to have been deposited in the Stockholm branch of the Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken, when it was hijacked. Trouble was that a momentary bout of amnesia caused the thief to deposit his haul in the same bank! He was arrested within half an hour.

Wee frauds

Games producers Epyx recently asked 750 business executives to answer a questionnaire regarding their private habits, and found that 66% of the naughty ladies and gents used their office computer for something not related to their work, like arcade games, writing letters, fantasy adventures and a massive 20% who admitted to using their machines for applying for new jobs! The nicest example of this sort of thing comes free with Spectrum Holobyte's World Two submarine game *Gato* which actually includes a fake spreadsheet if you hit your Escape key, whenever the boss has the nerve to pay your terminal a visit. (Available from Mirrorsoft, folks.)

Does anyone remember *Movieman* from a Derby software house called Impact? Mr Atkinson and Mr Allsop certainly do, they were the partners in crime who flogged computerised tax evasion systems to video rental shops. These neat little packages programmed computers to automatically cook the books for the taxman and VAT inspector, defrauding Her Majesty's Government of hundreds of thousands of which only £35,000 has been recovered.

Atkinson and Allsop were caught, pleaded guilty, and got nine months chokey a piece, plus £1,000 in fines. Don't feel too sorry for them though; I have recently published information which states that these two gents made nearly three quarters of a million quid from their scam, which works out to well over eight grand for each day of their jail sentence. It took Customs and Excise boffins nearly two weeks to crack the embezzlement program and find the secret *Book Cooker* but of the 120 video retailers who bought the package, only nine traders have been nicked.

Chances are that sooner or later you, yes you, will be the victim of computer crime, and there is very little you can do about it, apart from keeping your cash under the mattress for an honest-to-goodness old fashioned burglar to nick. Dozens of people already have access to your bank/building society/giro account number, your credit card numbers and your Personal Indentification Numbers. These 'PINS' used to be generated by computers, but now they are entered onto your files by VDU operators. Anyone can hack into any telecommuncations system in use, I know that, you know that and the banks know that. We also know that it simply ain't economic to protect the systems, even if it was theoretically possible. Chances are that you have already been a victim! . . . the gamble is that you haven't kept all your cheque stubs, credit card slips, receipts, and the bank's amazement that your last Statement of Account doesn't add up begins to ring false.

Next month I will serve you with another feast of computerised delicacies: data base crime, electronic blackmail, techno-terrorism, fire, looting, rape and pillage, well, I thought it was time for something a bit light-hearted . . .



ATARI ST £19·95

NTERTAINMENT





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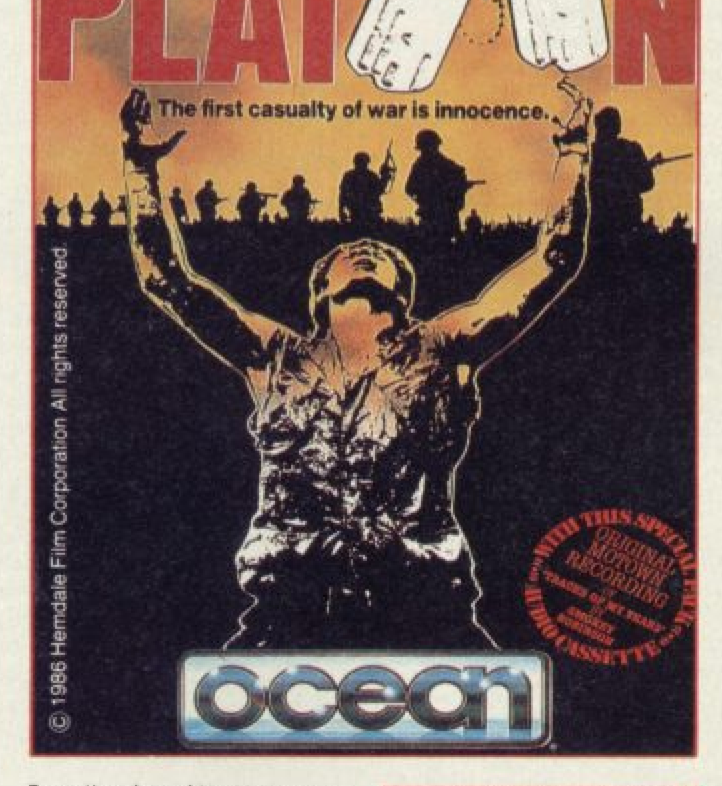
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Exceptional graphics, innovative game design and digitised sound all add up to recreate the atmosphere generated in the box office smash hit. Closely following the original storyline you take your platoon, selecting individual men for assignment, who will encounter the enemy and their many booby traps as you seek to find the enemy's underground headquarters. On entering the warren of tunnels you will need flares and a keen eye – your enemy will lunge at you, from beneath the waters which flood the tunnel floor, wielding vicious knives – the atmosphere itself is enough to kill!

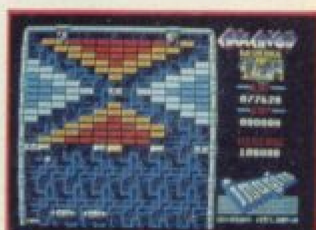



FROM



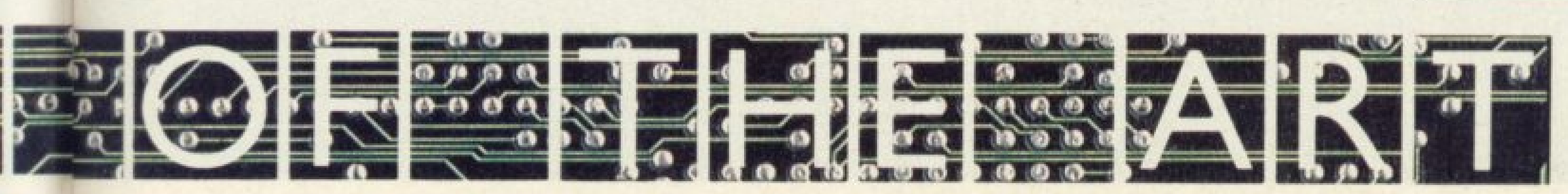


One phrase sums up the success and appeal of Arkanoid – "I'll just have another go!" Arkanoid is addictive! Using all the capabilities of the 16 bit micro this conversion is almost an exact replica with all the excitement of the original Taito coin-op smash hit. This is Arkanoid – the blockbuster.




FROM





elephone 061 832 6633 · Telex 669977 OCEANS G

GET TO GRAPPLE APPLE WIN A

How do ya fancy flying the Atlantic in a once-in-a-lifetime trip to the hottest metropolis: New York? **The Big Apple Entertainment Co**, publisher of **Oops!** (TGM **008** 75%) are offering the winner of this exclusive TGM competition the chance to take a bite of the Big Apple on a three-night-stay holiday (return flight included . . .) and a ticket to a Broadway show.

Big Apple intend publishing 24 titles during 1988 sourced from both the States and the UK, and they won't fight shy of the American razzmatazz attitude to get their games noticed. If you're at the Earls Court PC Show in September you'll hardly be able to miss the **Big Apple** Stand. It's a bit of New York complete with sky scrapers!

PART ONE

With the prize being as amazing as it is, the competition has been split into three parts. The first part is all to do with *Oops!*

In the following paragraph there are 20 oops or misteaks (yes, that's one) . . . find them all and you're well on your way . . .

Oops! is the utterly brillaint first release from new softwear house The Big Apple Entertaiment Company. Despite its deceptively freindly name, Oops! is as original as it is feindish, as fresh as it is adictive – and you'll be exclaming more than its title when you die for the umpteenth time.

In Oops! you play the part of a droid, scooting round the space time continuyum collecting vital gravity pods. Missjudge it and you'll be sucked into the Atomic Gravitational Field, a hipnotically scrolling riot of colour and designs. Hang around for two long on the pathways and one of the too Ringlords zaps you.

Dither en route and the glowing oringe electron bomb will introduce you to oblivien! In your flavor you can lay bombs anywhere along the path and you get a bonus screan (with no hazzards) every time you complete two grids. The positions of the gravity plods are fixed, so mapping and learning are possible – right up to the 32th screen!

CHOICEST APPLES

Five Stateside questions. Just how much do you know about the Big Apple?

1) What was New York called before it was known as New York? **a)** New Amsterdam **b)** New Brussels **c)** New Paris
2) Does the term Big Apple refer to . . . **a)** Oversized orchards in the state? **b)** The outline of Manhattan as viewed from above? **c)** A Twenties jazz term?
3) Who founded New York? **a)** Peter Beardsley **b)** Peter Stuyvesant **c)** Peter Pan
4) Who donated the Statue Of Liberty to New York? **a)** The English **b)** The Iranians **c)** The French
5) Name the main park located in Manhattan **a)** Western **b)** Eastern **c)** Central

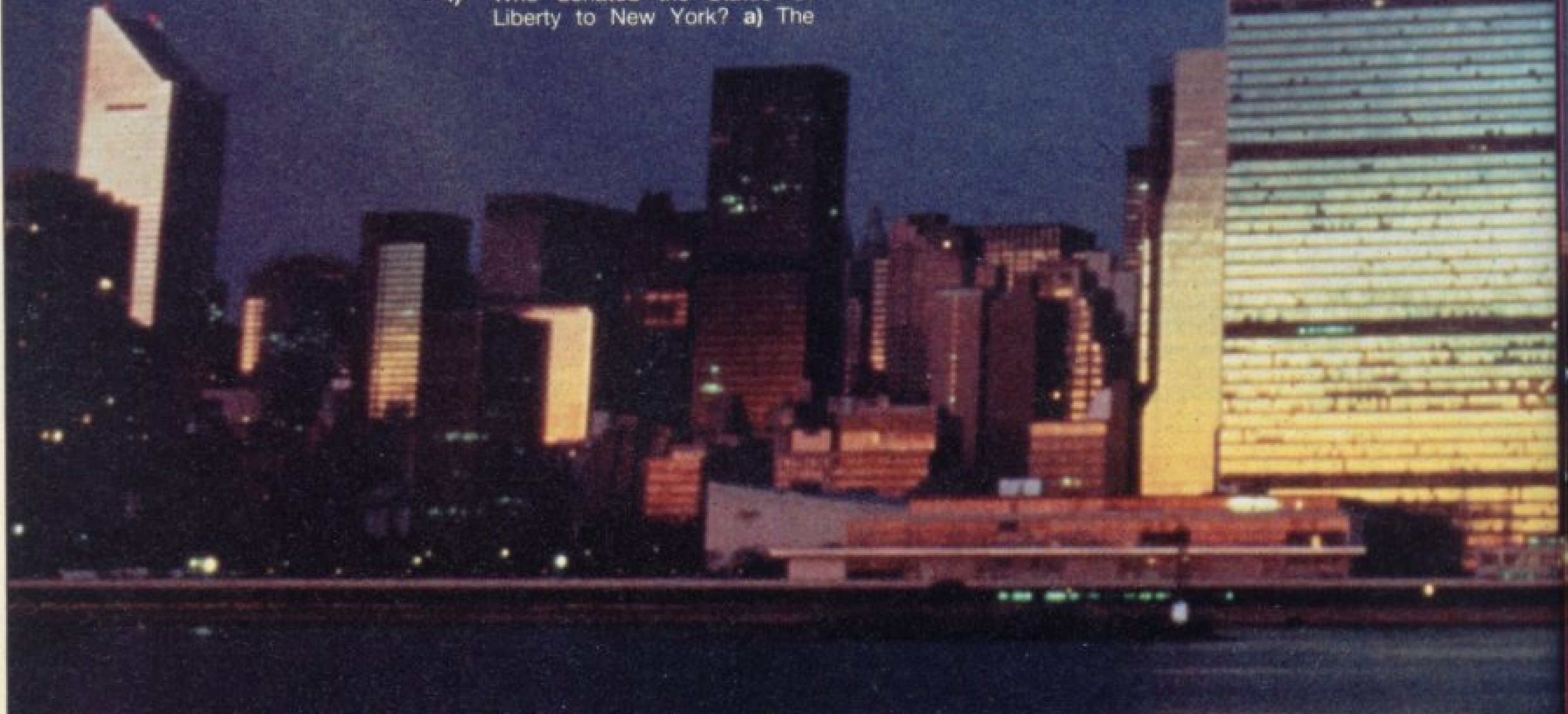
"Bite Big Apple on a three-night-stay holiday and a ticket to a Broadway show"

PRIZE PICKINGS!

First prize is for *two* people to fly Virgin for the start of their three-night stay in New York. While over there **Big Apple** are treating the lucky pair to a night at a Broadway stage show and the return flight! On top of that there's a copy of *Oops!*. For 25 runners up **Big-Apple** are providing copies of *Oops!* on the Spectrum, Commodore 64/128, Amstrad CPC, Atari ST, Amiga or PC.

HOW TO ENTER

Using the entry form fill in all (or as many as possible) of the correct answers. Write the 20 misteaks, ring the appropriate letter in the multiple choice and complete the sentence in Part Three. Then complete your name, address and other personal details and send to the address given. The closing date for entries is **September 15** and all potential holiday makers must follow the competition rules as detailed on the contents page or we'll leave you in the ghettos of The Bronx.



E WITH THE BIG
A TRIP TO NEW YORK

TGM/BIG APPLE COMPETITION

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PART TWO: CHOICEST APPLES
ring the correct answer

1 a b c
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3 a b c
4 a b c
5 a b c

PART THREE: BUT WHY?
Yes, we know you'd just love to win this American holiday but why, exactly? Complete the following sentence in the most apt, original and amusing way, using no more than 20 words.
I'd like to visit the Big Apple because . . .

Name: ....
Address: ....
....
.... **Postcode:** ....
Telephone number .... **Age** .... **Computer owned** ....

Send to: **BIG APPLE COMP, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***




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CONFRONTATION: COIN-OP

Taking a break from the Blackpool and Manchester arcade scene, coin-slot pumper Robin Hogg visits London. Pictures by Cameron Pound, and thanks to Gary Newman and the rest of the staff at Deith Leisure for the help and use of the machines

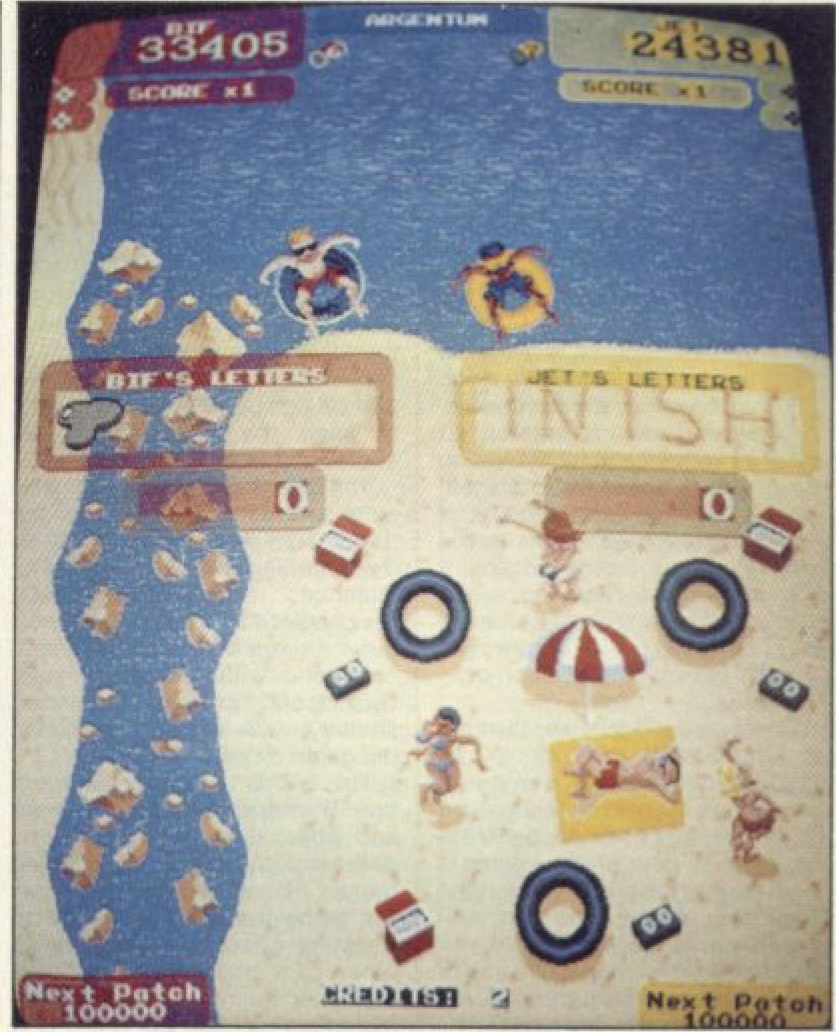
SLOT NEWS

BIGGEST release yet to wing its way over here from Japan is a new **Sega** machine – follow up to *Afterburner* and a mighty expensive one at that! It's called ***Galaxy Force*** and it not only comes in the familiar *Afterburner*-style surround-cockpit form but also a Super De Luxe system with a unique roll mechanism. The cabinet uses both axes of movement to pivot the seat and player and can almost turn through a complete circle! The cost of this arcade extravanganza? A whopping £17,000!

It will be very interesting to see how ***Galaxy Force*** fares through the rest of the year. Even the big-league arcades in Blackpool, London and on the East Coast may think twice about taking on the Super De Luxe model, bearing in mind the nil chance of making a quick return that comes with a such a high-priced investment. But let's hope some of them do.

Another Sega game arriving here soon is the **PCB** coin-op ***Altered Beast*** which has had a mixed reception since its release partly due to its well-worn rescue-the-girl-from-her-captors theme and the lack of a strong title from Sega since the notoriously successful After Burner.

Finally, ***Konami*** *should have* ***The Main Event*** in the arcades by now or at least very soon. Taking the sport of US wrestling for its theme, it looks to be an enjoyable coin-op incorporating the usual high quality extras for which Konami are renowned both in graphics, sonics and speech, together with that all-important touch of humour which makes it great fun to play.



The sedate scenes belie the manic action involved in Toobin'

TOOBIN'

Atari

Just when it looked as if there were no original ideas left in the coin-op circuit, along come Atari with a real gem of an idea. If you thought driving a Testarossa at breakneck speed along Californian highways was cool, think again. After all, what could be cooler than lying back and taking in the sun while floating sedately along down a river on an inner tube?

Atari's *Toobin'* allows you and a just-as-cool buddy to do exactly that. For this bout of arcade summer fun, the action is viewed from overhead as Bif and Jet race on inner tubes downstream toward, what else but, a beach party!

Starting off on the Colorado rapids, the kids move through Indian territory, the ice-cool Yukon, down into the not-so-cool city sewers, the cool-but-very-hot Rio Grande, the Argentum and onto weirder locations like the river Styx, Prehistoric era, Nightmare Land even out to the Canals of Mars for what's best described as a way out trip! Real c-o-o-l, man!

Along the way, creatures, inanimate objects and other hazards make their tube-busting presence felt as the duo paddle through regions getting weirder and wackier very minute. Trees in the water, submarines, sewage pools, arrow-firing indians, dive-bombing crows, bottle-throwing punks, psycho knife-wielding hands in the water, Martians, killer penguins, deadly fly-casting anglers, falling boulders, fire-breathing *Gauntlet* dragons, bears, dinosaurs; the list goes on an on, you name it you'll probably find it in there somewhere!

Collecting tin cans and throwing them at the creatures and foes in each region stuns the enemies allowing Bif and Jet safe passage past. Collect cans as you go or you may find yourself running out at the worst possible moment. Treasure chests, beach balls and other bonus items can be picked up along the way for those vital bonus points. Passing through bonus point gates increases the score multiplier with the higher scoring gates moving about to make life difficult. The really BIG points are gained by collecting the



PRESS ANY KEY

letters found along the waterway which make up the word 'TOOBIN'. Dawdling too long brings on a large and mean 'gator to persuade slowcoaches to get moving. Warp whirlpools allow expert players to jump straight to the more advanced levels.

Toobin' is simply brilliant. The presentation is typically Atari – virtually flawless – with gameplay which is simple yet overwhelmingly addictive. The action is tough but each new stretch of water has its own little graphic and sonic extras to entertain as you float along. This together with a control mechanism which is simplicity itself (four paddle buttons arranged in a circle with a fifth button for firing tin cans) makes *Toobin'* close to being Atari's best ever coin-op and undoubtedly TGM's coin-op of the month.

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Taito

Taito in 1989 will emerge as the most prolific video arcade machine producers. Having already entertained us with smash hit *Operation Wolf*, they're about to do it again with *Continental Circus*, a Grand Prix racing game with a difference.

Its standard theme – race a Formula One car around world race tracks – reminds of Konami's *WEC Le Mans*, but it's improved 1,000% through the addition of 3-D glasses.

Continental Circus uses the time and qualification rank principle to keep the player going. Run out of time before the next checkpoint on each circuit, or fail to beat the qualification rank, and the game is over. As you progress through the eight circuits, the time and rank requirements decrease until, for the final course in Japan the player must finish in the top three to win – a tall order to say the least.

You start off in Brazil. The Formula One car is a lot harder to control than on other coin-ops, not only for its speed (which beats *Out Run* easily) but also because of its high level of sensitivity. Skids, with complete and often fatal spins, proving disturbingly easy to induce. Collide with another car or roadside hazard and the car begins to belch smoke which, unless extinguished by going into the pits, rapidly turns into a fire and blows up the car. High speed collisions are immediately fatal – the car flips over and explodes.

Like a real race, weather plays an important part. When it starts to rain, complete with sounds of thunder and lightning, stop off at the pits to change to wet tyres and use the rain puddles on the course to keep the tyres cool – an excellent touch.

The time limit for each course is extended as the player passes through checkpoints in the race for the circuit finishing line. The distance between each checkpoint is surprisingly short but a merciless time limit, combined with extremely nasty twisting and turning courses, soon shatter any illusions of completing the game on your first go.

The 3-D is extremely subtle in use. The impression of movement and objects flashing past is no different from normal racing games, it's only at key moments in the game that the 3-D works to beautiful effect. Wreckage from other cars bounces toward you and checkpoints flash past with incredible realism. But the 3-D is *really* stunning when you crash; the ensuing explosion literally throws a tyre out of the screen at the player! Mere words aren't enough to describe this effect, it has to be seen to be believed!

On top of all this, the graphics, sound and speech are excellent, there's even a 'GO!' to be heard when money is put in. My only complaint is that it's yet another racing game; how about something a little more original next time Taito? By the way if you're wondering what the game has to do with circuses it's actually called *Continental Circuit* but in true Japanese style, the title has suffered somewhat in translation!

3-D glasses enhance the Pole Position*-type driving action in* Continental Circus



DRAGON NINJA

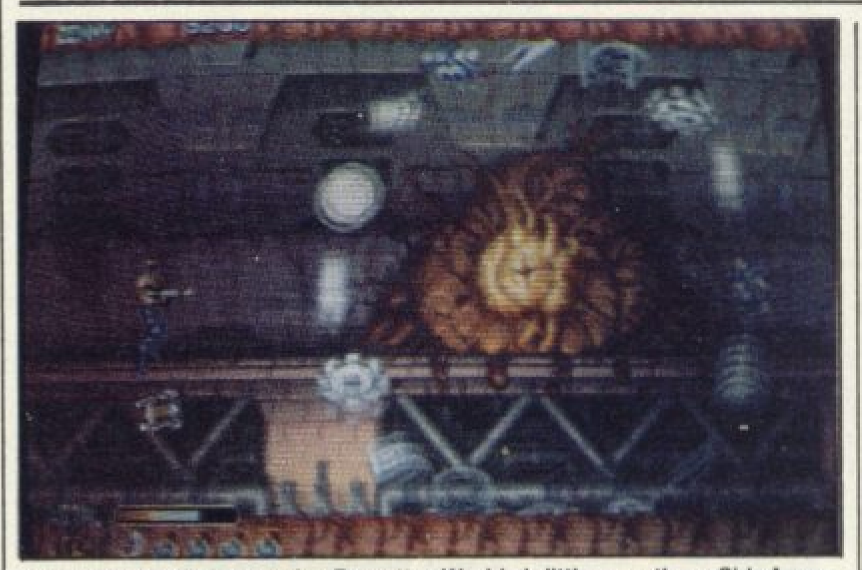
Data East

Beat-'em-ups still have life in them if Data East's latest offering is anything to go by. Like virtually all martial arts games the player gets to fight an entire army of Japanese-style warriors, but this time a second player joins in, giving the game a much needed boost by allowing for team work and player cooperation.

Okay, we've all seen it before: two warriors taking on ninjas, shuriken-throwing warriors, sword-wielding samurai, fishnet stocking-clad female fighters and other deadly oriental types and typically big end-of-level opponents – all fairly uninspired stuff. But *Dragon Ninja* has some extras which breathe a little more life into the tired concept.

On the first level, the players take on all comers on top of a lorry rushing through a city, with ninjas leaping up from passing cars. Later locations include the roof of a goods train, caves with fighting dogs and falling stalactites, warehouses and more before arriving at the final confrontation with the big boss himself on board a hovering helicopter – a nice touch. Some of the baddies are original too, amongst them a warrior who suddenly stops fighting, chants to the Gods and then promptly multiplies ten-fold!

All in all I wasn't too impressed with *Dragon Ninja* as a game idea. It's entering an extremely crowded market and there's nothing astoundingly new about it. What it has going for it is its high playability and I enjoyed. Well worth a look.



Although visually impressive, Forgotten Worlds *is little more than a* Side Arms *clone*

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

Capcom

First of the brand new, strong Capcom titles for '88 and '89 is here, but *Forgotten Worlds* proves almost anti-climactic. What we have here is a very pretty, very fast and very, very tough shoot-'em-up, but simply a variation on Capcom's old *Side Arms*. Original this is not.

Essentially gameplay consists of one or two future soldiers flying through various horizontally and vertically scrolling regions, wasting any aliens, cannon, obstacles and end-of-level foes that bar the way through each zone. A dial is used to rotate the soldier and a joystick to move him around the screen, the fire button is activated by pressing the dial down while moving and rotating – sneaky! Destroyed aliens leave behind Zennys which act as currency and can be used to buy extra weapons, lasers, special abilities and lives from a shop that erupts from the ground at opportune moments during the action.

The graphics range from good to fantastic, the foreground aliens and scenery are wonderfully detailed and colourful but it's the end-level opponents and the backdrops which blow the mind when they're first seen. The Dust Dragon, its flesh blown away with every laser hit, is a wonderful graphic; so too is the Samurai Warlord which – at least four screens tall in height – must rank as the biggest coin-op baddy yet!

Forgotten Worlds is totally over the top in everything. The graphics get bigger, more colourful, more stunning on the eyes with every level and the presentation just leaves most other coin-ops standing. The action is, in two words, total overkill. The violence is constant with laser bullets and aliens flying around the screen at horrific speeds, and the game's demands are immensely high. My main gripe with *Forgotten Worlds* is that it's extremely easy to die, making it an expensive game to play. Although unbelievably unoriginal, *Forgotten Worlds* is a great shoot-'em-up which goes to excess in presentation and looks set to rocket Capcom to stardom as one of the leaders in coin-ops.


More death and destruction with Dragon Ninja

SECRET SERVICE

Data East

Moving slightly further afield in the world of arcades, we encounter a new pinball machine from Data East. Set in the glamorous world of double agents, spies and undercover work, *Secret Service* is an interesting arcade table in its presentation. As well as digital stereo sound and music from American spy/secret agent serials such as *Get Smart* and *Mission Impossible*, the table has a Matchbox Ferrari within the case next to a scale model of Washington DC.

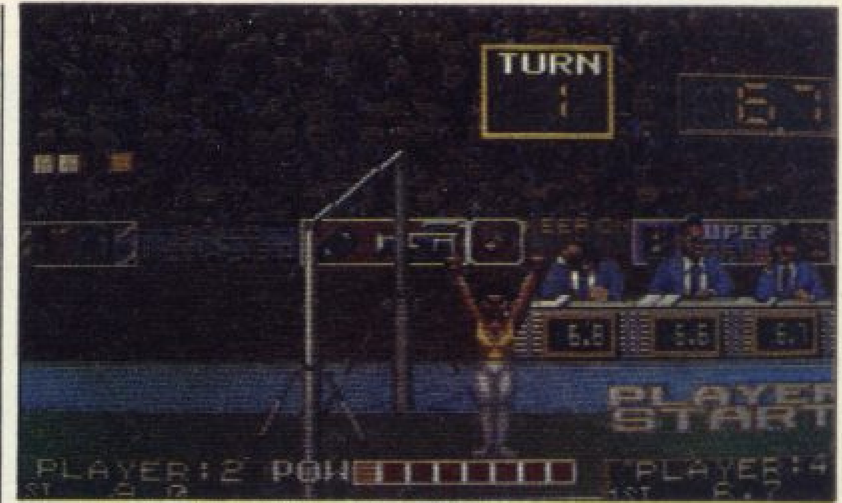
Its playability is high: not only is the standard bumper and double/treble point systems familiar to almost all tables present, but there's also a ball-eating trap, an elevated platform behind Capitol Hill, concentric scoring pad for massive points, a secret KGB hideout, a *big* points grid made up of fighter jets as well as a nice line in multi-ball play with up to three balls bouncing around the play area at any one time.

Like the *Space Shuttle* table, *Secret Service* is certainly eye-catching and visually clever while retaining the fun and playability factors of previous Data East pins.

While we're still on the subject of pinball tables, take a look at the latest Williams table *Banzai Run*. Set over a unique vertical 'hill' within the case, the pinballer competes against other riders and ultimately attempts a cliff jump in a bid to become King of the Hill in a motocross bike race without the mud!

Secret Service, *a wizard pinball*





An updated Track And Field, Gold Medalist

GOLD MEDALLIST

SNK

Physical punishment time is here again, and all in the name of amusement as the 1988 Olympics roll round to Seoul.

With nine events to take part in, you are assured of a frantic time of joystick-bashing, the likes of which haven't been seen since the legendary *Track And Field*. The 100m sprint, discus, swimming, long jump and other familiar events are all here, along with the wrist-wrecking 400m relay, horizontal bar and boxing to add variety to the proceedings.

The former events have been done just as well in the Konami range of sports coin-ops and while they are, to a certain extent, highly playable, it's all been seen before leaving only events like boxing and the horizontal bar to provide a new challenge. Veterans of the previous Olympic coin-ops may find this a enjoyable game to play and master, but I expected much more of it. The rehash of old events coupled with some very tough qualification times makes *Gold Medallist* a disappointing release despite the Olympic fever surrounding the 1988 Games.

ARK ARENA

UPL

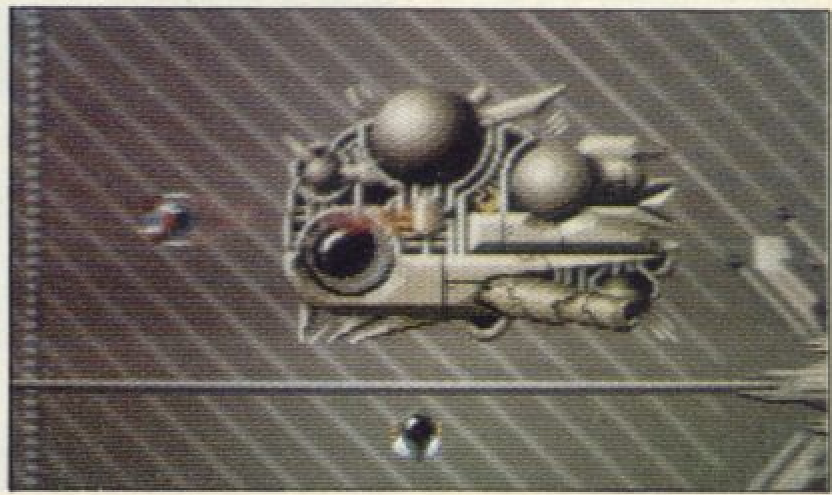
There isn't a lot that can be said about *Ark Arena*, it's an eight-way scrolling shoot-'em-up viewed from above in which one or two players roam through each of 23 zones wiping out alien creatures which fly in from all directions. Extra weapons like lasers, missiles and other standard future armaments can be collected from the remains of dead aliens before an alien mothership pops up.

The mothership offers little challenge, proving decidedly easy to kill, and only uses its speed to crush any player's ship unfortunate enough to become sandwiched in a corner. Once defeated it's onto the next zone for more of the same thing but with different graphics. That's about all there is to this coin-op.

But to prevent it from sinking without trace, *Ark Arena* does have a dual-player option, the graphics are fairly attractive and your ships do fire laser bolts with satisfying rapidity. Unfortunately its gameplay is repetitive, lacking any addictive qualities whatsoever and there's no incentive for arcadesters to continue playing.

Not only is *Ark Arena* tired in play, but it looks it too. A game such as this should at least have fancy graphics to hide its extremely shallow ideas, but it hasn't, and as a result looks doomed to become a companion to *Space Invaders*, gathering dust in the corners of arcades.

Two-player doldrums on Arc Arena



I CAME, I SAW

CONQUEROR

Superior Software

£24.99

Conqueror was written by **Jonathon Griffiths**, known more familiarly as **David Braben** (co-author of *Elite* and programmer of the first game for the Archimedes, *Zarch*) Not surprisingly, therefore, the game's graphics routines are instantly recognisable.

Conqueror brings us down to earth from the lofty heights of *Zarch*'s hoverplanes and takes us back in time to the Second World War. It is based on the European-theatre tank conflicts that played such a decisive role in the conflict.

The mechanised forces of the American, Russian and German armies have been incorporated into *Conqueror*. Each army has four types of tank: light, fast machines, medium capability and heavy duty (featuring poor speed but greater firepower). You are given the choice of commanding any of the three armies, although the Russians are not permitted to fight the Americans.

Conqueror is in effect three games in one, the first game, Arcade, is the simplest. The player takes on infinite waves of enemy tanks, each new wave being more intelligent than the last. This is a no-win situation game but allows the player to get used to controlling the tank, the strengths and weaknesses of the various opponents and general gameplay.

The second game, Attrition, gives the player a complement of two light tanks, two medium and a heavy tank against a similar, but slightly less powerful force – controlled by the computer. This level brings in a mild form of strategy with the ability to order tanks to selected positions on the map using one of four speeds – from the cautious, obstacle avoiding SLOW pace to the maximum risk but radid and direct CHARGE.

The display screen in Conqueror



The third game, Strategy, combines all elements of the previous two games in one, while being a full blown strategic/tactical conflict. At the start, the first strategic task is to assemble a battle-group of tanks. Each tank has to be bought with limited funds – the lighter, faster tanks are the cheapest. Beginners can only afford a couple of light tanks or one medium, credit has to be earned by completing successive battles – once enough is gained, up to 15 tanks can be bought, making a formidable force.

Within the strategy game are extra features of artillery directed fire and spotter planes can be used at any time during the game, at a cost of 500 and 1000 points respectively. Calling on artillery sends a bombardment of shells to a selected target area, levelling anything in the vicinity. Sending spotter planes over the battlefield reveals the position of all enemy tanks – this isn't a player-only option, the computer uses it from time to time.

During battle, tanks are not always instantly destroyed. Various parts of the tank may be damaged, depending on the targets armour strength, the incoming shells velocity and where the shell hits. The turret may cease to operate, the tracks may become stuck in one position, the engines reduced to half or quarter speed or the tank itself may catch fire. To repair any damage, limp away from the conflict and avoid further attacks for 20 seconds,

APART from **Superior Software**, Minerva are one of the few companies who have supported the Archimedes since its birth. Though primarily applications, business and education software, the Exeter-based company were among the first to release leisure software for the RISC machine. Their first title, *Minotaur*, was a 3-D maze game aimed at the younger person which, while nothing of a breakthrough in software technology, highlighted the machine's educational use and to a certain extent its leisure software capabilities. *Hoverbod* and *Missile Control* are two further titles for the Archimedes from Minerva Systems.

HOVERBOD
Minerva Systems

£14.95

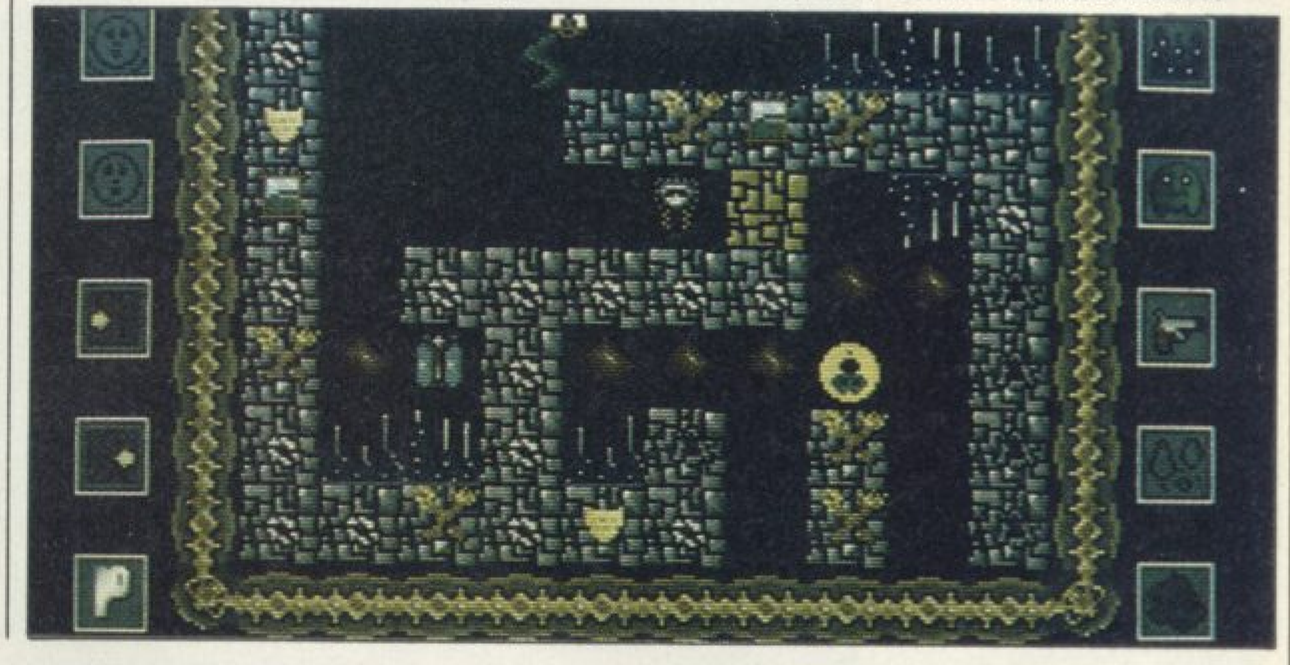
A REWORKING of the standard arcade-adventure style of game, *Hoverbod* concerns the antics of Hoverbod, a yellow ball-like droid who after banishment from his planet of Zingle now wreaks a subtle form of revenge by stealing treasures from his enemies, the dreaded Ibby Squiblies. Hoverbod rolls from screen to screen, collecting diamonds and other treasures from the caverns on each level, once enough diamonds are collected, Hoverbod is given the next level's password and continues the search for treasure while moving ever nearer to the eighth and final Quest Level. If Hoverbod fails, the password system allows him to jump straight to the beginning of the level that caused his demise.

At the beginning, Hoverbod can only move left, right and fall down shafts from screen to screen, fortunately, a hover pack can be easily found that enables him to fly, a gun collected to shoot Squiblies and other items can be picked up along the way to make passing hazards easier. The game is played against an ever-decreasing oxygen level, fortunately bags of oxygen can be picked up to keep Hoverbod going. Hoverbod dies if he stays in one position for too long, runs out of oxygen, touches any creature or butts his head against the spikes hanging down from the ceiling.

Hoverbod is essentially a puzzle game with a sprinkling of arcade action. The problems are lateral with progression to other screens only possible once certain objects have been collected and used correctly. Picking up the wrong object or moving the wrong block can trap you, leaving little option but to quit and try again. *Hoverbod* uses the basic elements of the *Repton* series but unfortunately does not work as well. The graphics are colourful in their basic form but simplistic, looking more like an 8-bit game - the gameplay mirrors this. A pleasant product but lacking significant addictive qualities or depth.

OVERALL 54%

Dive for cover, here's **Hoverbod**



after which any damage sustained is negated.

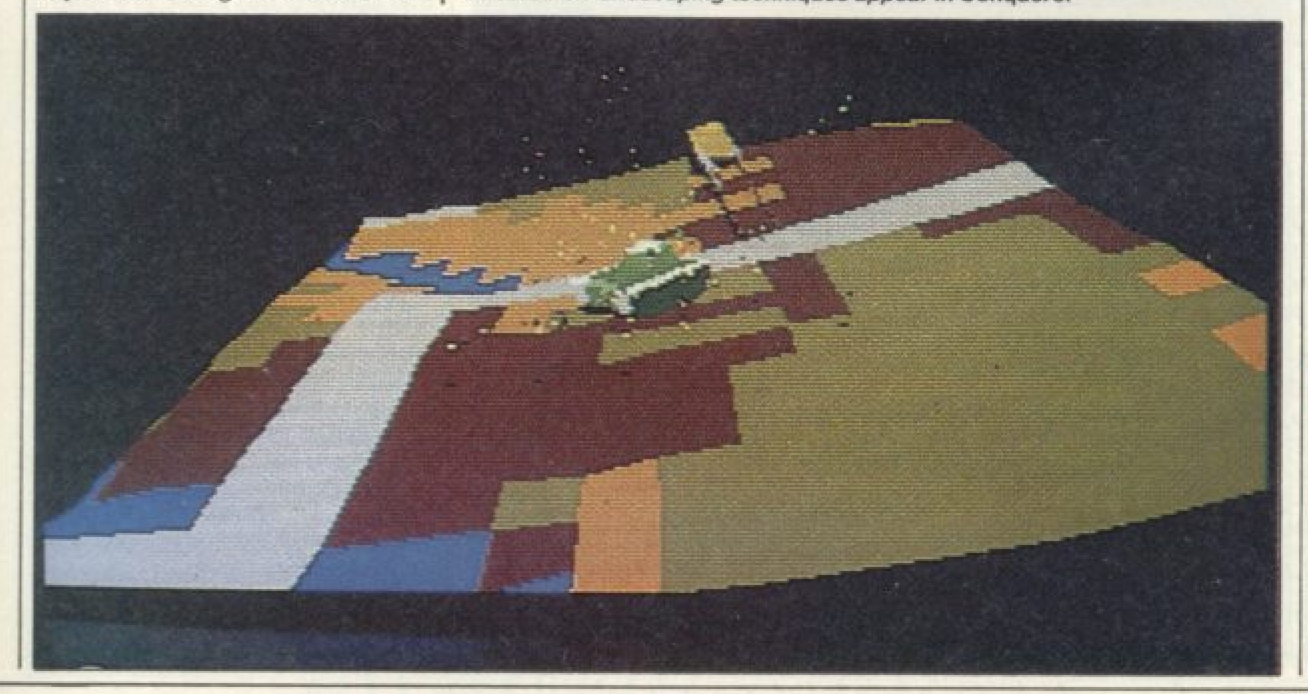
Destroying tanks isn't the only way to victory. Move a tank to a selected objective (highlighted as a circle on the map) and stay there for 60 seconds, whereupon the battle is won - this is a safer method of achieving victory but requires that no enemy tanks enter the region within that vital minute.

I tank through the trees

Unlike *Zarch*, *Conqueror* is primarily controlled through the keyboard, using a *Battlezone*-style control. The tank's turret is also controlled through the keyboard, although the mouse is offered as an alternative for moving the turret and firing shells. Unfortunately, controlling the tank through both mouse and keyboard is not easy, sole use of the keyboard is not much of an improvement – get a friend to take control of the turret while you command the tank's movements.

The Braben style of graphics comes to light in *Conqueror*. Roads, trees, fields, rivers, houses and churches scroll past smoothly using depth and colour shading highly effectively. Tanks leave track marks in the ground and the shell explosions are highly effective: throwing dirt into the air, turning buildings and trees into smoking hulks and ripping turrets off enemy tanks. The *Conqueror* world scrolls past in all directions with the landscape sinking towards the bottom of the screen when the tank descends into valleys, moving back up when the tank climbs hills and ridges. While the impression of speed and movement is not as pronounced as in *Zarch*, the action is no less intense.

More Zarch landscaping techniques appear in Conqueror



Each of the three games is playable over ten skill levels wherein the computer opponent increases in ferocity and strategic/tactical skill. The rewards for victory on higher levels increase but so do the demands on the player. *Conqueror* succeeds not only in novel presentation but also by its combination of demanding arcade and strategic play across ten skill levels.

With more depth than Superior's previous Archimedes game, *Conqueror* is a change towards the more strategic style of game and as such is a change for the better – a product that is addictive and challenging in both the arcade and strategy sense of the word.

Due to memory constraints, *Conqueror* is not compatible with the bottom-of-the-range, unexpanded Archimedes 305 system. It does however work with an expanded memory 305 as well as the 310, 410 and 440 Archimedes machines.

OVERALL 87%

"A product that is addictive and challenging in both the arcade and strategy sense of the word."

MISSILE CONTROL
Minerva Systems

£14.95

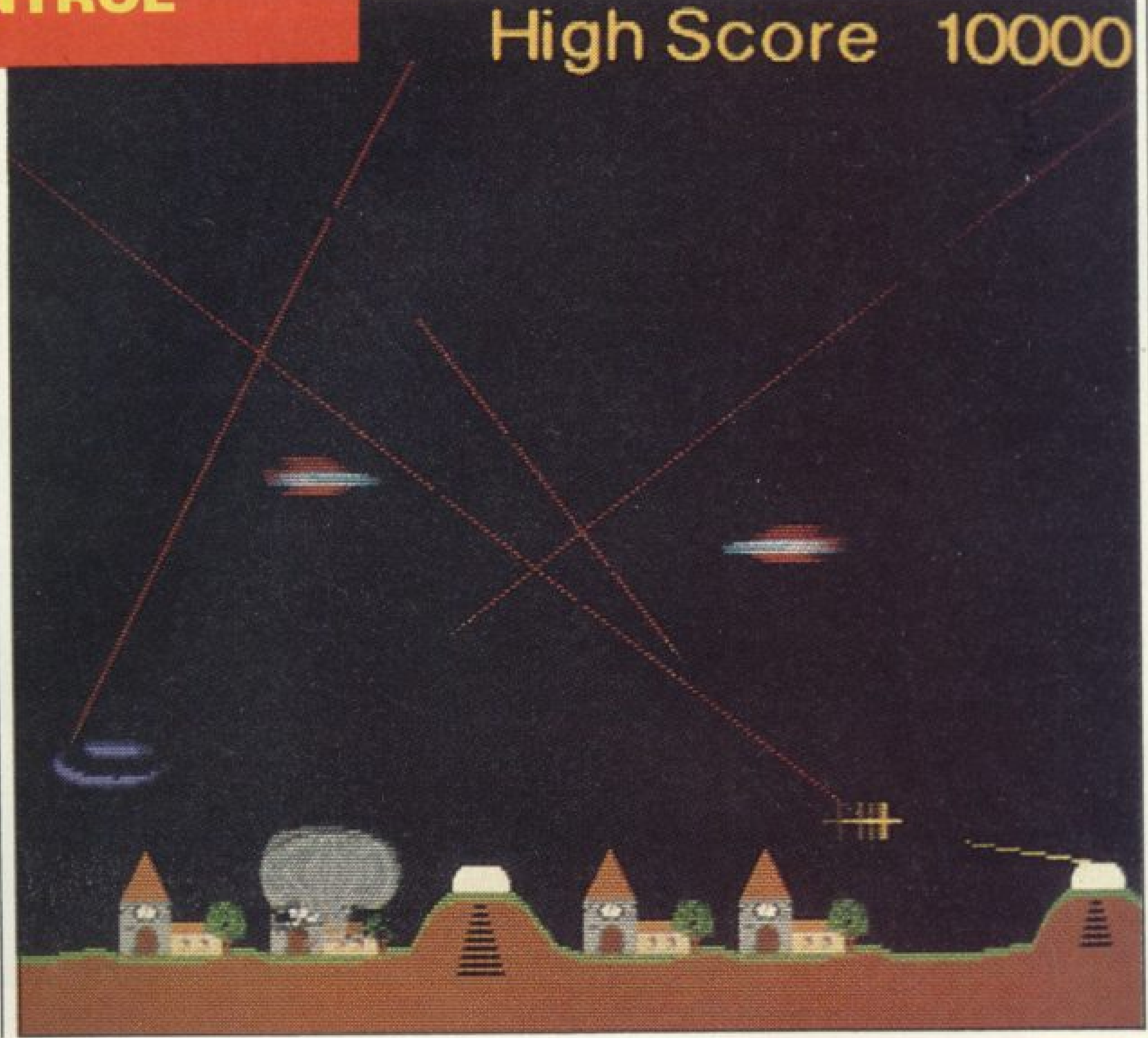
WRITTEN by Richard Hayton, *Missile Control* is an unashamed clone of the old classic Atari coin-op *Missile Command*. Upon loading it quickly becomes obvious that the original coin-op is not the best game to convert.

Even with 32-bit RISC power to hand, here is a game which is best suited to the territory of 8-bit games (and even then can only serve as a very basic game). In *Missile Control* the Archimedes isn't even trying, despite the presence of speech on the loading screen. The graphics are poor, with little in the way of detail or colour. Spaceships and planes that fly overhead (dropping Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicles) flicker and, astonishingly, the action slows down when the screen gets crowded. Sound effects are limited to explosions of buildings and missiles.

Missile Control's repetitive gameplay, lack of depth, limited sound and horrific graphics are the kiss of death – especially after playing programs of the calibre of *Conqueror*. It becomes clear why the Archimedes is being classed as an educational machine with games like *Missile Control* around.

OVERALL 35%

A typical 32-bit game? Missile Control



A SUPERIOR FUTURE?

A game to tickle the fancy of Archimedes owners is *Terramex*, converted from **GrandSlam**'s enjoyable arcade adventure. That it looks very similar to the Amiga and ST games is a testament to Archie's graphics ability.

Leeds-based **Superior Software** are the leaders in leisure software for the Archimedes – if only for their two games *Zarch* and *Conqueror*. Superior do have three new titles lined up for release in the months leading up to Christmas.

The first is a specially converted compilation of the *Repton* series of games, which have had many a BBC and Electron owner pulling their hair out in frustration. The compilation will include thse four: *Repton 3, The Life Of Repton, Around the World In 40 Screens* and *Repton Through Time*, together making up a massive 160 brain-torturing screens.

The obligatory character and screen editor of the original BBC/ Electron versions are to be included, all presented in a manner taking full advantage of the machine's capabilities (a phrase you're going to hear a lot of with the Archimedes!), while retaining the successful basic *Repton* formula. Following in the ever-addictive, ever-playable *Boulder Dash* style, the *Repton* compilation looks like being an instant hit and at least as enjoyable as it was on 8-bit Acorn machines.

Another Superior game in development goes by the working title of *Brixx*. An addition to the bat-'n'-ball theme, *Brixx* is promised to consist of 150 screens, a comprehensive screen editor and 'take full advantage of the Archimedes to make for a spectacular graphic and sonic treat', according to Superior's **Steve Hanson**. The title of *Brixx* may be changed because PC Leisure/ Prism already have a very poor *Breakout* game out at the moment for the PC called *Brixx II* (TGM**008**, 17%) and Superior may want to avoid any confusion. Whatever its title, the game will be priced at a respectable £14.95.

The third, and potentially the best, title is a space action/strategy game under the working name of *Deliverer*. Using solid 3-D graphics, the nearest game it can be likened to is the classic *Elite*, although Steve Hanson points out that *Deliverer* has a lot more strategy and depth to it. The game concerns planet-conquering. You take the role of Supreme Commander of an army of future troops as they make strategic wargame-style assaults on planet defences. You move between planet and space station in the attempt to destroy aliens attacking the planet.

An edit space-craft feature allows the player to add extra weapons, configure the ship and its specifications to suit the situation. In its final name and form *Deliverer* will be priced at £19.95 and, like *Zarch*, could well be another milestone game in (here we go again . . .) showing off the capabilities of the Archimedes and its 32-bit RISC power.

The Archimedes 310





ARCHIMEDES ART

Is 32-bit art a bit better than 16-bit art or lots of bits better? Robin Candy gets his hands on two art packages for the Archimedes, Artisan **from Clares Micro Supplies and** Arctist **from Fairhurst Instruments Ltd, and checks them out against each other and compares them with the top ST and Amiga products**

ARTISAN

You get two disks in the £39.95 *Artisan* package – the art program and a support disk which allows the manipulation of pictures. Written by J Warmisham and F Dart, *Artisan* operates in a full WIMP environment, so there's no need for screens full of text.

The use of the mouse buttons follows the Acorn convention of SELECT, MENU and ADJUST for the left, middle and right buttons. MENU usually calls up the current menu if it is not visible while ADJUST is used primarily to undo the last function.

On loading, you are presented with a window containing eight icons. This is the main menu from which all other menus and functions are accessed. The first icon is PENCIL. Selecting this pulls down the PAINT menu which contains the main tools for painting. There are four brush shapes: circle, ellipse, triangle and square. Sizes can be increased or decreased with the relevant icons. These four are fine for doodling but have little practical use when drawing complex pictures where it is much handier to customise your own brush.

The Zoom Editor caters for three levels of magnification. Clicking ADJUST increases magnification from x2 to x4 or the maximum of x8, while clicking MENU calls up the colour palette from which brush colours can be altered. The magnification window takes up most of the screen, obscuring the rest of the picture, so changes in the unenlarged picture cannot be seen until the Zoom Editor is switched off. A poor arrangement. It would have been better to use the magnification mode employed in most other utilities where the magnified portion of the picture is shown screen-left and the unenlarged area is shown to the right, repeating the changes made in the enlarged area.

"Astonishingly, there's no SPREAD option so tight colour spreads have to be created by hand – a time-consuming task"

Paint is represented by a paint roller icon and fills an enclosed area with the currently selected colour or fill pattern. Fill patterns can be defined with the EXTENDED COLOUR FILL (ECF) designer. This shows the colour palette and eight ECF patterns, any of which can be altered. ECF patterns are created in an area of 8x8 pixels. Any colour from the palette can be used in the pattern so thousands of different fill patterns can be created. Pens can be created in exactly the same manner using the pen designer.

You can mix your own palette of 16 colours from a universe of 4,096 by clicking on the ALTER PALETTE icon. Colours are created using the popular RGB method. Red, green and blue are mixed in different proportions to produce any one of 4,096 possible colours. Astonishingly, there's no SPREAD option so tight colour spreads have to be created by hand – a time-consuming task.

The final icon in the paint menu is the MAGIC BRUSH. This novel command

PRESS ANY KEY

can be used to alter any colour within the brush area to another colour from the palette without affecting the rest of the colours. You specify the colours you want changed and what you want them changed to, then move the brush over the picture and the computer alters the colour of selected pixels as the brush passes over them.

Elastic bands

Back on the main menu the next icon (left of the pencil icon) calls up the Rubber Banding Menu. This contains various shapes including the usual circle, rectangle, triangle, ellipse, line and continuous line. Shapes are plotted on screen using the familiar click-drag-release technique. However *Artisan* contains two new shapes in the form of SEGMENT and CHORD SEGMENT. SEGMENT draws a circle with a portion missing from it. Exactly how much of the circle is missing is user-defined. CHORD SEGMENT draws an arc with the two ends joined by a straight line.

The final shape option is the RUBBER PEN. You define your own shape made up of a maximum of 64 which can then be resized using the mouse. With the exception of the RUBBER PEN, all of the shapes can be filled with the currently selected colour by clicking the relevant icon.

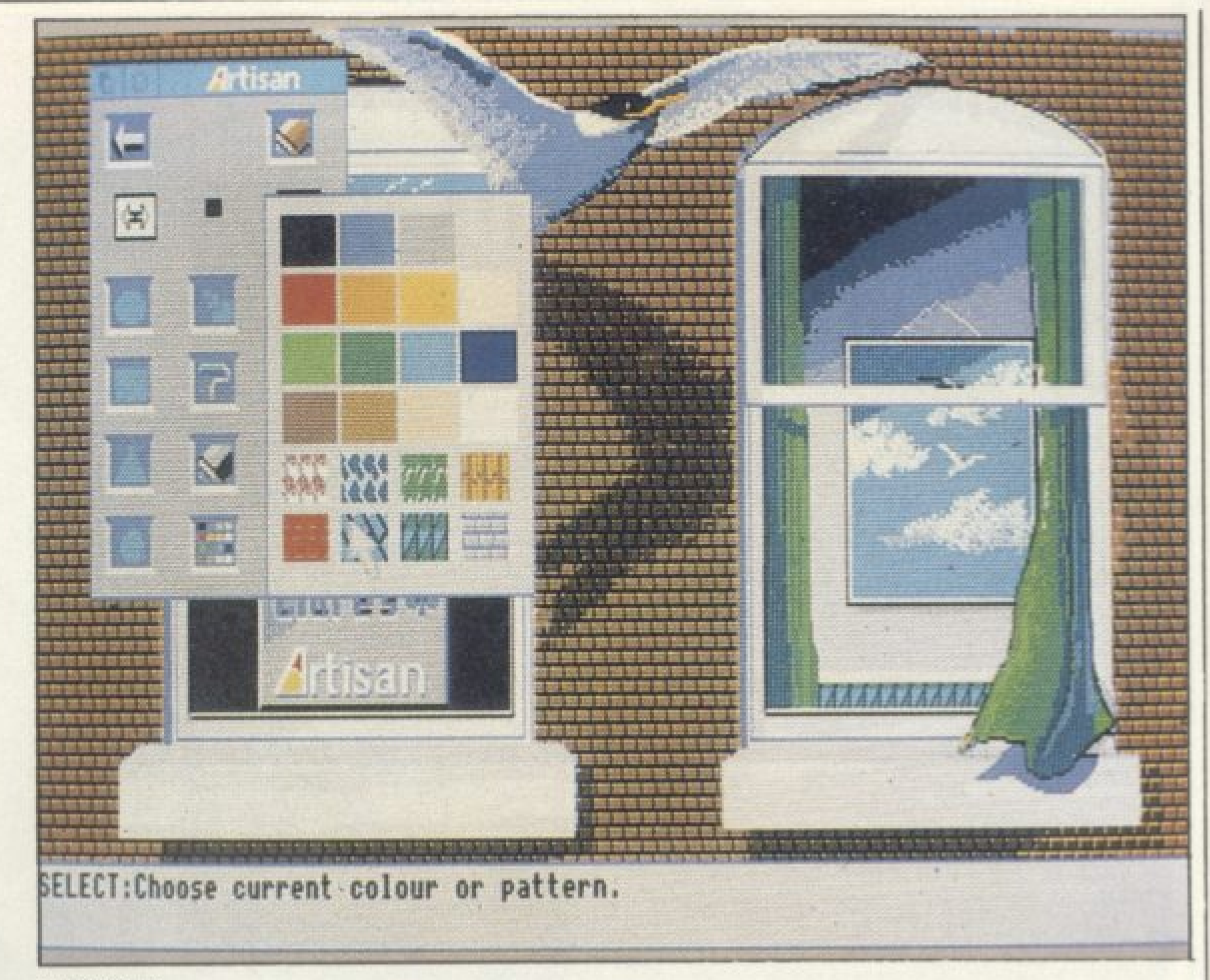
The third icon along on the main menu is Select the Sprite Menu. In similar manner to *DeluxePaint II*'s brush-grabbing technique, GRAB SPRITE allows any portion of the screen to be grabbed (memory permitting) and used as a sprite. Once grabbed, a sprite can be moved around the screen and repositioned anywhere. SPRITE PEN lets you draw with the current sprite. DELETE SPRITE erases a sprite from memory, While PUT SPRITE saves a sprite into Ramdisk. CREATE MASK makes a selected colour transparent, so when painting with that sprite the selected colour won't show on screen. The final icon in the sprite menu is GET SPRITE which lists all the sprites currently in the menu, any of which may be used as a brush.

The fourth main menu icon accesses the Toolkit Menu. This contains options for changing the mouse-response speed as well as several printer commands. EDGE DETECTOR changes a specified area from colour to mono. It looks for a change of colour and sets the pixel either to black or white – it creates some interesting effects. Text can be added to a picture in a variety of fonts. When selected the cursor is replaced by a rectangle showing the maximum size of the letters in the selected font.

Slide show

Returning to the main menu, the fifth icon is the HELP window. When this is toggled on a window opens at the bottom of the screen revealing a brief summary of each icon's function as the cursor passes over them. A thoughtful touch when you're getting used to the program.

The next icon accesses the Move And Copy menu, containing all the commands for manipulation of grabbed screen-sections. FLIP produces an image which is inverted either vertically or horizontally and sections can be rotated through any angle and



But is it art?

rescaled to any size. A mask can be created using EXCLUDE. It makes a selected colour transparent just like the CREATE MASK icon in the Sprite menu.

The two final icons on the main menu are concerned with all the LOAD/SAVE options as well as exiting the program.

The *Artisan* Support Disk covers three main functions, PRINTER DRIVERS, PATTERN EDITOR and DISPLAY Module. Clicking on the PRINTER icon opens a window containing all the possible print options.

The PATTERN EDITOR enables you to create different patterns for use with the Epson mono printer dumps. It works in a similar manner to the fill pattern editor in the art program.

The DISPLAY Module is a utility which lets you string pictures together and so construct your own slide show. Screens can faded into one another. There are eight inbuilt fade patterns which can be modified to suit your own needs. It's an excellent way of displaying your own pictures.

Conclusion

The WIMP environment has been implemented in *Artisan* very well. The number of icons and windows have been kept to a minimum and the addition of the HELP function means you're unlikely to get lost in the program. The accompanying manuals are surprisingly short when compared to some of the weighty 16-bit tomes which come with some art utilities. Nevertheless, well written, they provide all the necessary information to use the programs.

As an art utility *Artisan* performs adequately but offers little of note. Indeed there are several serious omissions such as the lack of an airbrush, no UNDO in the Zoom Editor, no SMEAR command so colours must be blended together by hand, and a palette restricted to only 16 colours. Compared to programs now available on the ST and Amiga, *Artisan*, frankly, is left very much in the shade.

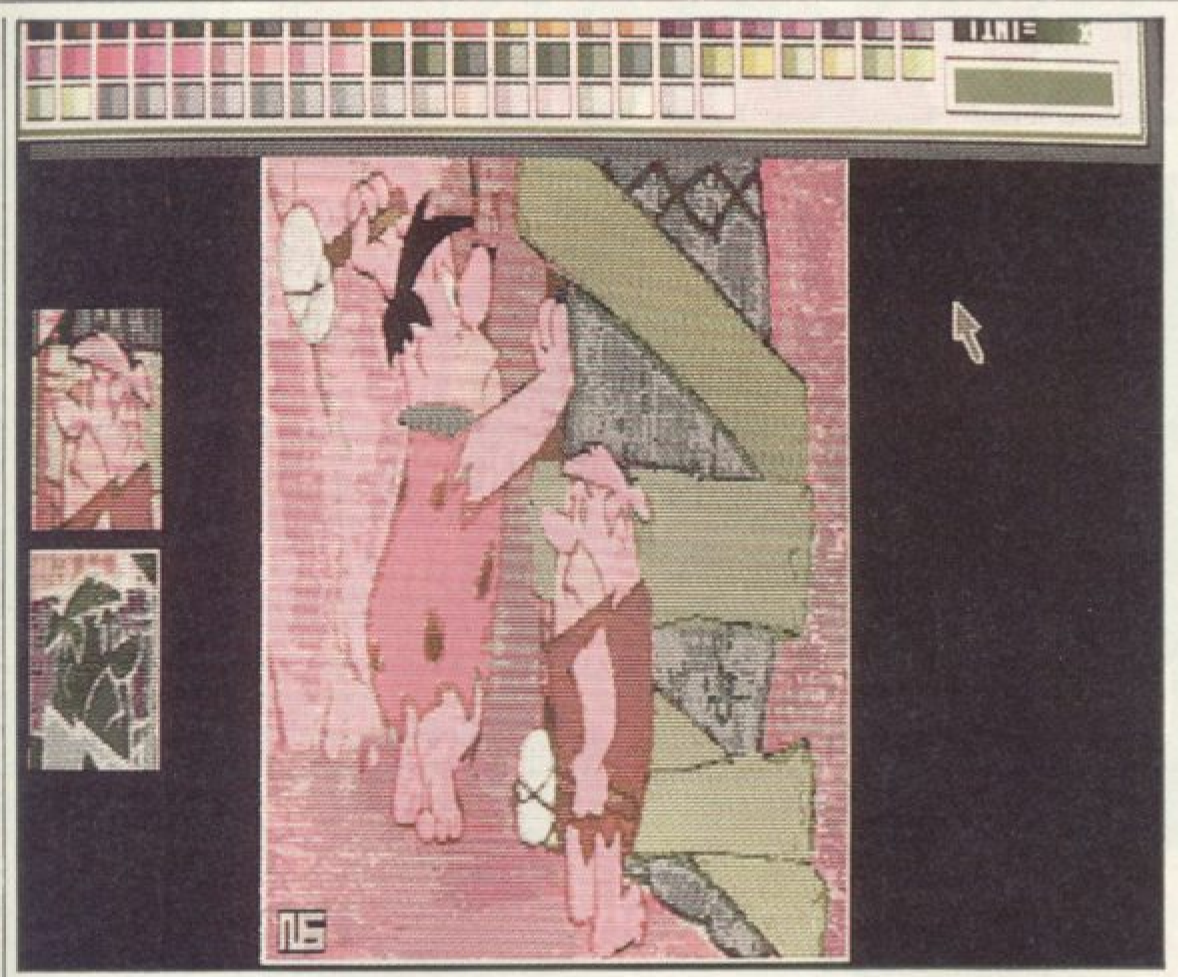
ARCTIST

Written by Nigel Stewart, Fairhurst Instruments's *Arctist* (£19.95) comes in drab packaging hardly reflective of an art utility, and accompanied by a positively miniscule manual featuring tiny print. Nevertheless *Arctist* boasts 256 colours on screen at once. Seductive words to any discerning graphics designer!

The program runs in a full WIMP environment using standard click-drag-release techniques for defining shapes and windows. Like *Artisan*, the mouse buttons follow the standard Acorn convention. Displayed at the top of the screen is the Control Bar which contains all the drawing tools represented in icon form. At the far left of the Control Bar is the Colour Bar. Selecting this pulls down the colour palette window. This consists of 64 colour boxes which can be set at four different levels of brightness thus providing the 256 colours – a doubling up of *DeluxePhotolab*'s Extra-Halfbrite trick reviewed last month. There's no provision for creating your own colour palette but the 256 available colours provide a wide enough range for most pictures.

Flip screens

The FILL icon fills an enclosed area with the currently selected colour. As usual care must be taken with the fill command since even a one pixel break in the boundary results in the adjacent shapes also being filled.



Barney and Fred display Arctist *features*

However, pressing UNDO erases the last action. Shapes come in three varieties: triangles, rectangles and circles. Circles also doubles as an ellipse tool.

CONTINUOUS LINE can be used to construct multisided irregular shapes. The shape tools can be used in conjunction with a FILL ON/OFF command to produce filled shapes. The final shape command is RAYS. You define the point of origin and can then proceed to draw as many lines of varying length as you want originating from the same point.

FLIP UP-DOWN and FLIP LEFT-RIGHT work in exactly the same manner: define a window, the contents of which are flipped vertically or horizontally depending on which icon is selected. INVERSE works similarly except this time the colours of the window's contents are inverted.

The Spray Can (an airbrush of course) produces a random pixel effect, particularly useful for shading. Upon selecting SPRAY a submenu is pulled down containing ten different levels of spray density.

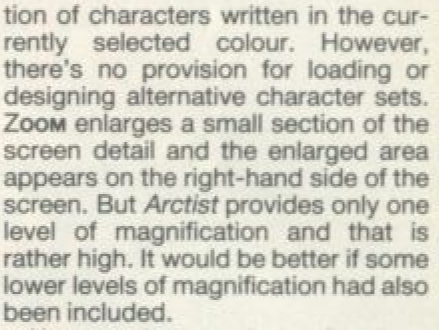
An area of the screen can be copied to another section using the COPY AREA icon. A window is drawn around the area to be copied which can then be dragged around and resited.

The FLOPPY DISC icon gives access to all the LOAD and SAVE options, while CLS clears the screen so that work can begin on a new picture.

"It's possible to create good pictures with both programs, but it takes more time than it would to achieve the same effect on either the ST or Amiga"

Overmagnified

The Control Bar contains a second row of four icons. SCROLL SCREEN scrolls the screen to the left. FILL ON/OFF is used in conjunction with the shape commands. When switched on shapes are filled in with the currently selected colour, otherwise only the outline appears. TEXT allows the addi-



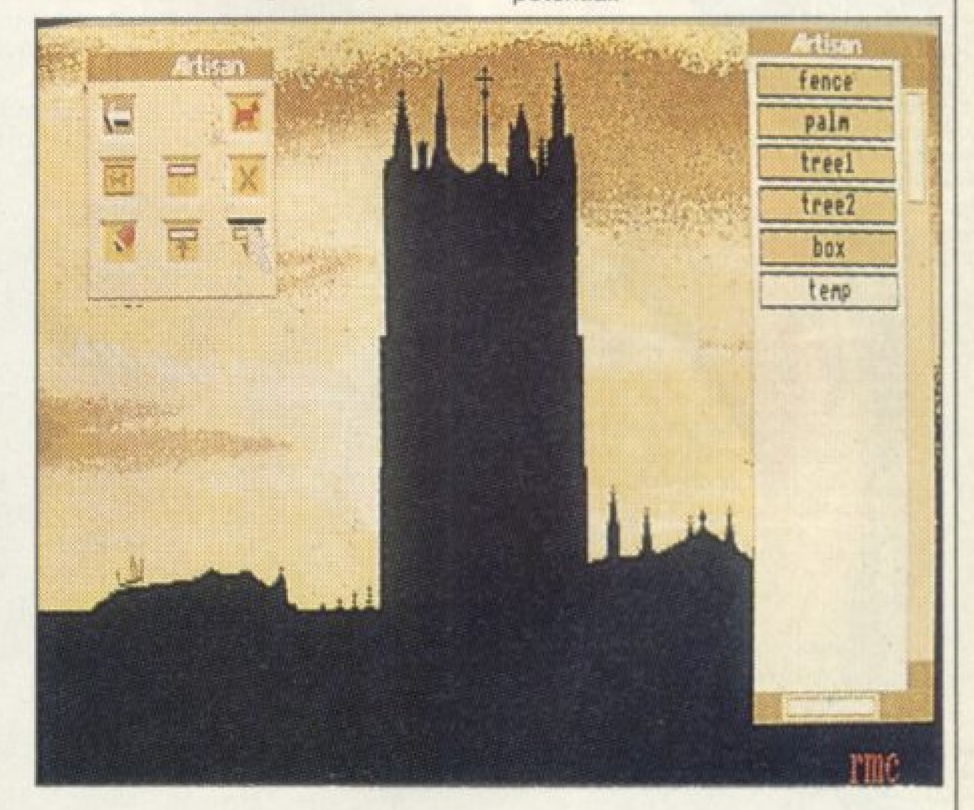
tion of characters written in the currently selected colour. However, there's no provision for loading or designing alternative character sets. ZOOM enlarges a small section of the screen detail and the enlarged area appears on the right-hand side of the screen. But *Arctist* provides only one level of magnification and that is rather high. It would be better if some lower levels of magnification had also been included.

Keys F1 to F11 have functions assigned to them. These include various printer options as well as functions to save and recall screens from Ramdisk.

Conclusion

Arctist is very simple to use right from the word go. The manual, a mere 13 pages long, explains all the functions in sufficient detail without skimping on information. Just like *Artisan*, *Arctist* performs adequately but leaves a lot to be desired. Many of the commands have been touched upon briefly when they could have been expanded to make the program much more powerful. Block manipulation commands are only noticeable by their absence, while a decent zoom facility wouldn't go amiss. *Arctist*'s main USP (unique selling point for yuppie designers) is undoubtedly the 256-colour palette but unfortunately it lacks sufficient commands to exploit this to its full potential.

Ludlow church looking heavenly



Arctist vs *Artisan* vs 16-bit

Artisan is undoubtedly the better presented of the two programs. The screen is uncluttered by menus and is more aesthetically pleasing. However the restricted palette and lack of airbrush are near-fatal flaws. *Arctist*, on the other hand, corrects both these faults but falls down in other areas. There is little in the way of block manipulation commands, and only having one font is terribly restricting. Both programs fall flat on their faces when it comes to their zoom facilities – an essential part of any art program. All of these omissions are the basic requirements of a good art utility, and that's without any special features to distinguish them from the rest. It's possible to create good pictures with both programs, but it takes considerably more time than it would to achieve the same effect on either the ST with *Dégas Elite* or the Amiga with *DeluxePaint II* or *Photon Paint*. The Archimedes obviously has the potential but sadly lacks the programs.

STREET SPORTS™ SOCCER

Screen shot from CBM 64/128 version.

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Screen shot from CBM 64/128 version.

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I CALL YOU A LIAR

Last month's article by good ol' Uncle Mel on the subject of creative plagiarism (TGM009 I ACCUSE) so incensed TGM's Stuart Wynne that he felt he had to put pen to parchment and come up with this passionate reply. Is nothing sacred?

Your Royal Highnesses, androids, Vulcans, etc. Much as I admire my Right Honourable friend, Mr Mel Croucher, I fear on this occasion the prosecution's arguments are somewhat faulty. The hyperbole of his opening address begins with an obvious *non sequitor*: all ideas are reworkings of other ideas, which is simply the way things are, but when an author passes off a stolen idea as original, that author should be exposed to the public gaze.

After buying numerous records, computer games and books, as well as watching a great many films I've rarely seen examples of this alleged rip-off, and Mel Croucher chooses to poorly illustrate his allegations in just four cases.

The first example of *Back To The Future* and *Lost In Space* may very well be a perfect example of a rip-off. I haven't seen the *Lost In Space* episode mentioned, but the evidence submitted is weak to say the least. A scientist inventing a machine which transports a young man into the past, where his actions could affect the future is integral to a great many very different time travel stories. The mad scientist and elaborate means of returning to the future were parodies of clichéd time travel stories, rather than rip-offs. In fact the main story is what the prosecution blithely dismisses as a sub-plot: the story of the principal character meeting his parents when they were as young as him. As for the incestuous aspects these, it seems obvious, are yet more jokes parodying Freud's concept of the Oedipus complex. Possibly the prosecution's sense of humour is restricted to the *Mercy Dash* cartoon.

The next example contains a great deal more information to support the rip-off allegation, unfortunately a great much of this either misrepresents the various plot-lines or is simply incorrect. In the *Star Trek* episode *What Are Little Girls Made Of?*, Dr Roger Korby does not create a 'sinister murderous male'. This character in fact predates Korby since he was manufactured by an alien, and long-dead race long before Korby discovered, rather than invented, the android technology. Similarly describing Kirk as 'investigating' like Deckard the androids, ignores the fact that Kirk has in fact been imprisoned and duplicated. The similarity of two scenes cited by the prosecution is even more superficial. Where Kirk seeks simply to confuse the android Andrea by replaying an earlier scene in the episode, where she had been ordered to kiss then slap him, Deckard is genuinely attracted to Rachael.

The other 'ripped-off' scene is an even worse example.In *Star Trek* Kirk briefly escapes into the catacombs but is pursued by the android, who catches and fights him. Kirk falls down but is saved when Nurse Chapel orders Ruk to rescue him.

In *Blade Runner*, Deckard arrives at The Bradbury to kill the last of the replicants. He kills Pris but fails to kill Batty who pursues him until Deckard ends up hanging off a building. After a long moment Batty proves his humanity by rescuing the murderer of his lover.

As for the plots both being rip-offs of *Frankenstein* because both mad scientists are killed by their creations, this is also factually incorrect since Korby is plainly shown to commit suicide when it becomes apparent he is himself an inhuman android. *Blade Runner*, by comparison, is the exact reverse of *Frankenstein* since the androids turn out to be more, not less human than human.

"Blade Runner, by comparison, is the exact reverse of Frankenstein since the androids turn out to be more, not less human than human"

"A scientist inventing a machine which transports a man into the past, where his actions could affect the future is integral to many time travel stories"

Finally there are the *Star Wars* and *The Snow Queen* allegations. Contrary to the impression given to you, the jury, the similiarities between the two tales are very slight. There are, of course, several different versions of the tale but the 1935 Cobden-Sanderson Ltd version reads very differently from *Star Wars*. Possibly the prosecution's version was written after 1977.

In the Cobden-Sanderson book there are few similarities. In any case, Kay, unlike Princess Leia, is a willing companion of the evil character due to the splinters of evil in his eyes and heart. Thus rather than being imprisoned he is pleased to remain in the Ice Palace. This is a key element of the plot. Further, Kay sends out no coded message for help. Instead his sister Gerda learns of his plight by talking to a wide variety of creatures which reply in riddles. Included among these are an enchanted garden (which does, admittedly, have a talking rose in it) and some ravens. None of these bear the slightest resemblance to the famous *Star Wars* droids.

After escaping an old woman who wants to keep her as a daughter, Gerda is then kidnapped by a band of Robbers, one of whom is the Robber Maiden whose whim keeps Gerda alive. Rather than being a companion the Reindeer is simply the band's animal, which the Robber Maiden enjoys torturing with her knife. It is, as the Prosecution claims, intelligent and hairy like Chewbacca, but as even the grass is intelligent in this story that proves little, and as for it being hairy, the book makes no special mention. Reindeer do tend to be hairy, one supposes.

"As even the grass is intelligent in this story that proves little"

The Wise-Woman Gerda meets next teaches her nothing, except that the innocence she already possesses is the greatest power anyone might have. The Reindeer, more akin to the Millenium Falcon than anything else, then takes Gerda to the Ice Palace beside the Frozen Lake where she kisses Kay and removes the ice splinters which have poisoned him. They then return home.The Snow Queen is not encountered but does, presumably, live to fight another day.

In conclusion I would ask the jury to acquit the accused on the grounds of insufficient evidence. While it is certainly true that elements of every story or film contain similarities to other fictional works, does that preclude the production of new and stunningly original fictions to entertain and educate us, the audience? On the evidence presented the three films discussed cannot, in my opinion, be judged any less original on the evidence put before the court.



"It is, as the Prosecution claim, intelligent and hairy like Chewbacca"

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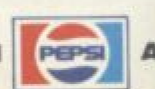
To reflect this new direction, we've also retitled the event 'The Personal Computer Show' and moved it to Earls Court, London's premier exhibition centre.

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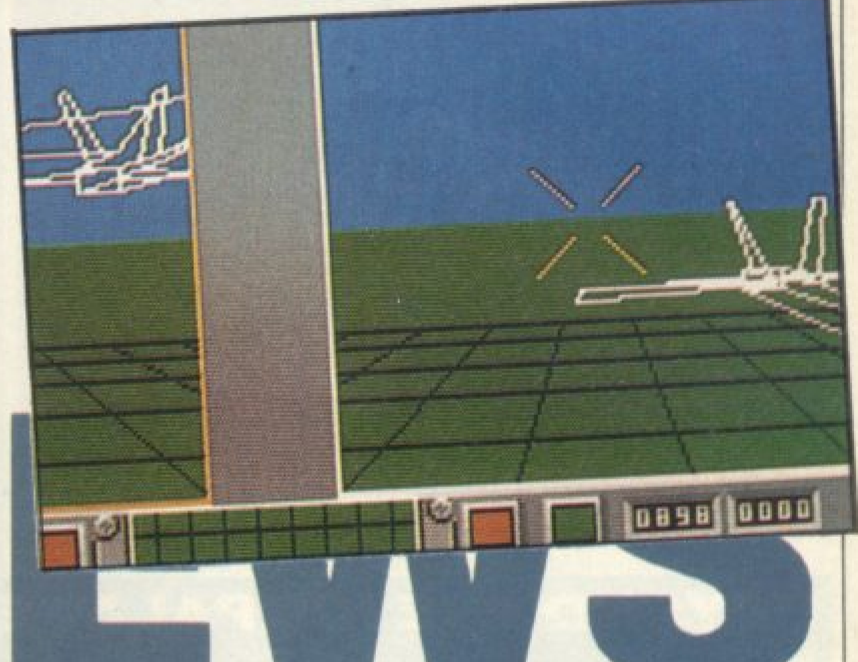
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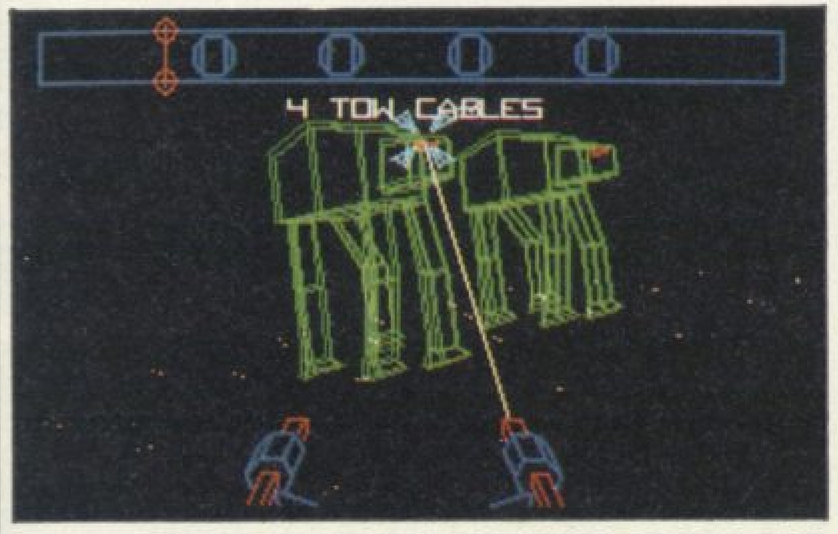
LEAD REVIEW

55 ■ SKY CHASE

Take yourself on a sky high trip with Image Work's launch product for the Amiga. *Sky Chase* is a two-player air-to-air combat simulator modelled on Air Force and Navy flight training school competitions. Dakka dakka boom, as they say.



REVIEWS



74 ■ THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Let your ST have a taste of the Empire experience – four levels of hard-hitting arcade action featuring fast vector graphics.

56 ■ MICKEY MOUSE

The squeaky-clean Gremlin Graphics/Walt Disney game hits the ST, Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64/128, with all thsoe versions reviewed this month.

76 ■ TRACKSUIT MANAGER

Awful title but probably the best football management game to be seen, upstaging even the ever-popular *Football Manager 2*

51 ■ BARD'S TALE III

The third instalment in the Electronic Arts fantasy series comes to the Commodore 64/128 with more spells, songs and fighting than ever before.

74 ■ REVENGE OF DOH

Arkanoid 2 reaches the 16-bit sector with a high addictive rendition on the Atari ST. We find it hard to keep our hands off. Definitely not just another brick in the wall.

69 ■ OVERLANDER

Take *Buggy Boy* and push it a step further and you've got *Overlander*, best of the three road racing/combat games we've seen this month. Incredibly fast driving complete with frantic combat makes this the fastest ST game on four wheels.

43 ■ WHIRLIGIG

Mike Singleton's latest creation shapes up on the ST this month, featuring remarkable animation and solid 3-D effects.

PRESS ANY KEY

Paws mode

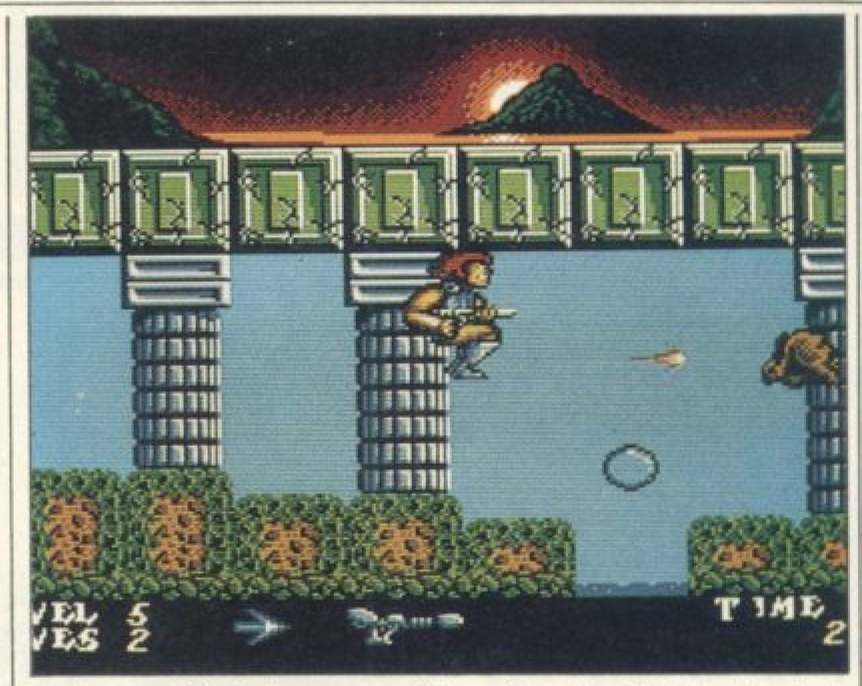
THUNDERCATS
Elite

Amiga: Diskette £19.95

LION-O at last bounds on to the Amiga in order to rescue his fellow Thundercats.

Although graphically very good – with the main character looking remarkably like his TV cartoon image – control is sluggish. Games of this ilk require instant responses from joystick movements for the player to get anywhere. At first, life after life was lost as Lion-O failed to exercise the lightning reflexes of his namesake. However, once the idiosyncrasies are compensated for, the thrills instilled by the Commodore 64/128 version begin to emerge and although sound should have been improved *Thundercats* remains an excellent example of its genre.

AMIGA: OVERALL 81%



The hover car is but a leap away and Lion-o, the pride of the Thundercats, is almost there

VERSION UPDATE

BEYOND THE ICE PALACE
Elite Systems

Amiga: £24.99



A screen from the early section of **Beyond The Ice Palace**

HYBRID combination of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* and *Thundercats* in gameplay, *Beyond The Ice Palace* takes the successful key elements of the two former titles and mixes it all up in one tough multiway scrolling arcade adventure. The Amstrad and ST versions were reviewed in TGM 007 with the Spectrum version update following an issue later.

On the Amiga, like *Buggy Boy*, the game is a near direct conversion from the ST. All the features, caverns, level layout, graphic and sonics have been recreated. Somehow during translation a slight judder has crept into the scrolling, which, while noticeable, doesn't affect gameplay. The graphics hardly push the Amiga, although, nicely detailed and using sensible colours, they're still only slightly improved, smoother 8-bit characters running around. Likewise, the Amiga sound quality is similar to the ST version, a touch better in effects and tune.

The high – bordering on the frustrating – difficulty level of the other versions is still present, leaving little margin for player error. Even nine lives don't seem enough as the action is constant, the demands are high and the computer sometimes jumps the gun to kill you off. This type of arcade adventure is relatively new to the Amiga, and while Elite's offering is in no way original in design or as a game idea, it's playable, fast-paced, addictive, demanding and generally very enjoyable.

AMIGA: OVERALL 78%

VERSION UPDATE

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2
Addictive Games/Prism Leisure

Amstrad CPC: Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99

THE trickle of sequels to the classic six-year-old football management game is rapidly turning into a flood. This month the Amstrad CPC version makes an appearance; the ST game was reviewed in TGM**008** (65%) with the Amiga and Spectrum versions receiving 63% and 68% respectively in TGM**009**.

The presentation and graphics are in the mould of the original *Football Manager* and have not progressed any further since its day. Across all formats, the game is more or less the same, this version being no exception with little use made of the CPC's graphic and sound capabilities.

The oversensitive control of the ST and Amiga versions has been rectified, but the match highlights have been cut down by the omission of an action replay when a goal is scored.

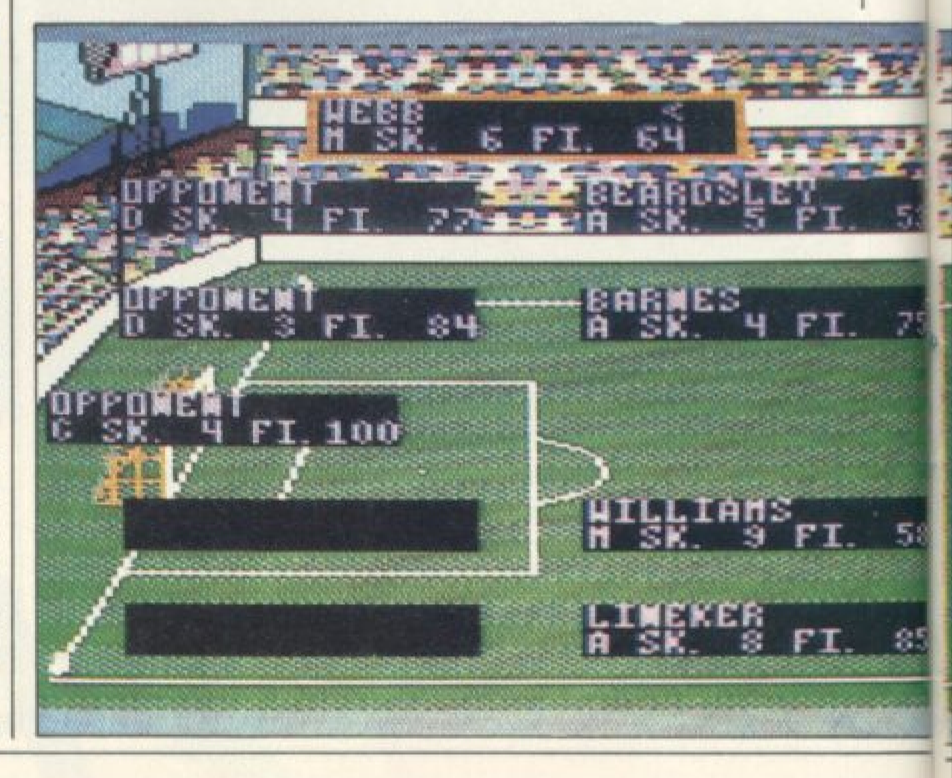
The players flicker slightly and the sound effects of kicking the football are muffled by the roar of the crowd.

Much like other versions, this offers precious little over *Football Manager*; the welcome addition of the team set-up screen is offset by the lack of skill involved in developing in-game tactics.

As such *football Manager 2* is only worth looking at if you haven't played the original.

AMSTRAD: OVERALL 64%

It's a funny old game – Amstrad screen



GIVE IT A WHIRL

WHIRLIGIG

Firebird

The designer of this game is one of the giants of 8-bit computing through the massive success of his excellent *Lords Of Midnight*. Since then Mike Singleton and his production company **Maelstrom** have branched out into the 16-bit market – *Star Trek* was the first Singleton-designed ST game.

In the future machines are live things, born rather than made and attended by tiny, humanoid 'bio-things', otherwise known as humans. One such inferior being refuses to accept his lot in life, however, and resolves to steal the next ship to be 'born'. When all is ready you sneak aboard, flip the switch and take control. It is the first time in centuries that a man has flown such a Powership. Pursued by the mothership and numerous aliens you flee through space, hopping from stargate to stargate.

The Whirligig of the title is a huge network of mini-universes, or 'eigenspaces', connected by stargates. There are over four *billion* eigenspaces and it would take a player 8,000 years to play them all, spending 30 seconds on each. Fortunately there are usually several stargates on a level, so millions of levels can be jumped at a time.

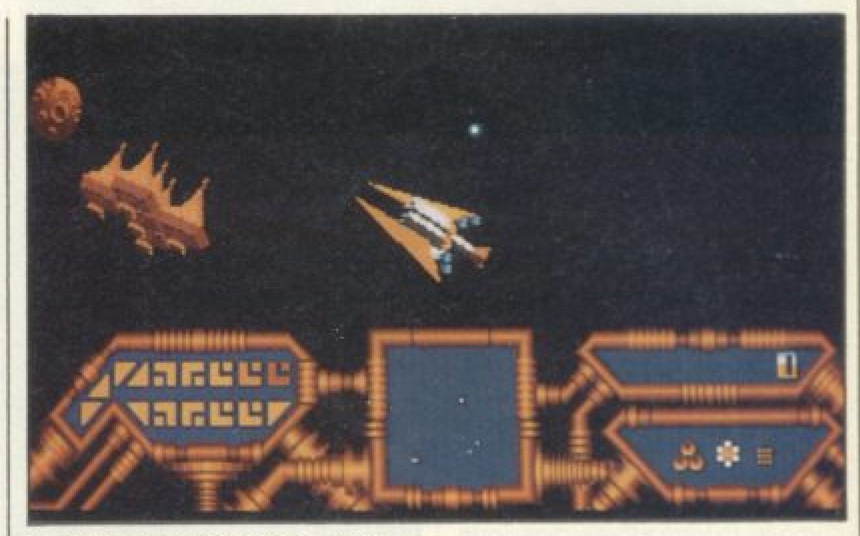
The objective of the game is to find five perfect solids and drag them into a stargate. The location of these solids is shown by the on-board computer, but to successfully reach them by the quickest, or safest route is the hardest part of the game. There's no save facility so theoretically it shouldn't take too long to complete with the necessary skill and route plan.

Chaff

Trying to prevent success are a wide variety of enemy ships which are initially static and unarmed, but on later levels are joined by homing-missile equipped cruisers which will relentlessly hunt you down. Your ship is armed with missiles and anti-missile chaff. Unfortunately the missiles are undoubtedly the dumbest ever made – if launched when nothing else is in the immediate vicinity they home in on your own ship, often orbit enemy ships rather than destroy them, and even attempt to fly through your ship if it's in the way of an enemy. A rather more attractive feature of the ship is how it shows you, without need of the optional control panel, how well-equipped it is. If fuel is low the rocket motor shrinks, the cockpit moves forward as missiles are exhausted and the number of chaff pods can be clearly seen displayed on the wings. All of these vital stores can be replenished at depots, which occur fairly frequently in the Whirligig. Nevertheless the control panel can still be very useful for finding stargates and depots.

Whirligig is clearly another masterpiece of códing that, very much like *Virus*, has relatively simple gameplay - fly around, shoot things - but an exceptionally difficult, mouse-only control system. More often than not lives are lost through collisions with Stargates and errant missiles, rather than enemy ships. Once control has been mastered then the problem of repetition becomes apparent.

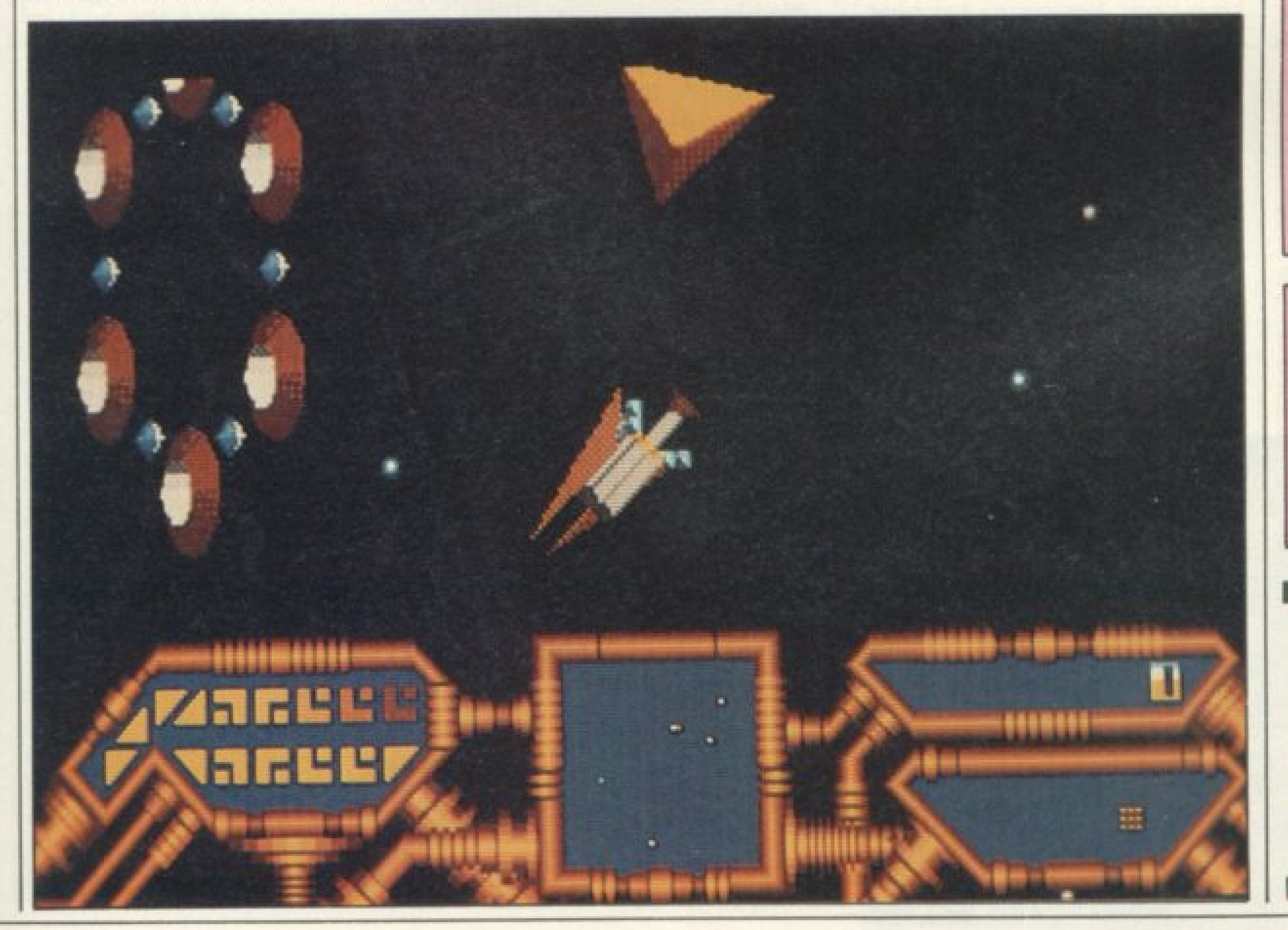
Undoubtedly fun to play, and great to watch, *Whirligig* seems to lack the depth of play which has distinguished Mike Singleton's previous work.



In search of perfect solids in Whirligig



Solid animated 3-D graphics add to the fascination of Whirligig



ATARI ST
Diskette: £19.95

The graphics of the spaceships, stargates and various depots are all quite dazzling to watch and destroy. Yet whether Light-source 3-D **really is revolutionary isn't obviously apparent since** Carrier Command **has bigger and equally detailed sprites on offer. The huge quantity of screens is nice, but the 25-second wait between sectors is irksome while the optional background tune is rather weedy. An enjoyable game, but not quite up to the quality of the graphics.**

OVERALL 83%

OTHER VERSIONS

Conversions are imminent for the Amiga (£19.95), Spectrum (£7.95-cassette, £12.95-diskette), Amstrad (£8.95-cassette, £14.95-diskette) and C64/128 (£9.95-cassette, £12.95-diskette).

"Once control has been mastered the problem of repetition becomes apparent"

VERSION UPDATE

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

US Gold

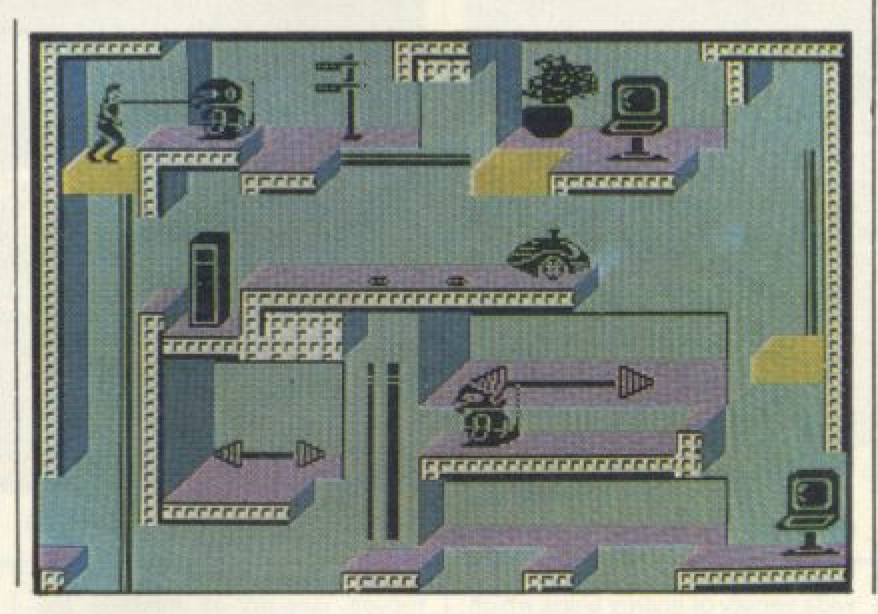
Spectrum: Cassette £8.99

THE infamous egghead Elvin Atombender has returned to threaten the world again, as first revealed in TGM**006** (CBM 64 86%), TGM**007** (ST 85%) and TGM**009** (PC and Amstrad CPC 84% and 72%). Agent 4125 must once again explore Elvin's eight-tower complex to try and reach the control room where the deadly missile must be disarmed.

Each room contains an array of platforms patrolled by six different types of robot. 4125 avoids the guards while searching for numbers to form a three-digit code which allows access to the next tower. If the agent collides with robots, he loses lives or time.

Hidden commands can be used at the various computer terminals to disable robots, reset lifts, move platforms horizontally, gain extra time, or detonate bombs.

Now you can play **Impossible Mission II** *on the Spectrum too*



Each tower contains a safe which, when blown open, reveals a musical sequence. Only when all the correct sequences have been found (some are useless duplicates) can 4125 access the express elevator to Elvin's control room.

Most noticeable about the Spectrum version is the virtual absence of sound – even the musical sequences are inaudible.

Graphically, *Impossible Mission II* is very similar to its predecessor, with bland backgrounds and monochromatic sprites. Gameplay is also very similar with little improvement made, although this inherits the original's playability. Overall *Impossible Mission II* is too similar to its predecessor and lacks the atmosphere of the other versions.

SPECTRUM: OVERALL 73%

VERSION UPDATE

PHM PEGASUS

Lucasfilm/Electronic Arts

PC: £24.95

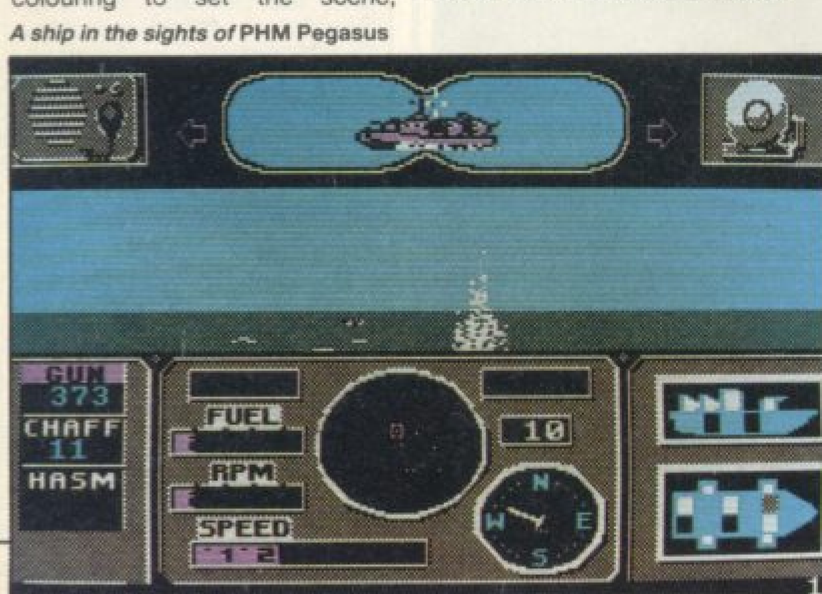
NOAH Falstein and the Lucasfilm team bring us the PC version of their arcade action/simulator game based on the Hydrofoil Patrol Boat Pegasus. *PHM Pegasus* received 76% on the Commodore 64/128 in TGM**003**.

On the Commodore, the multiple missions were what gave the game its depth. Electronic Arts has taken note of this and added ten new missions, making 18 in all. They range from the probable, such as capturing drug-running speedboats off the Miami coast or escorting cargo ships through the Persian Gulf through to the less credible missions; Sink the Bismarck. The missions are pitched at different difficulty levels and all offer variety and challenge.

The PC uses greys and military colouring to set the scene, although the harder missions provide much of the atmosphere in their generation of tension and excitement. Sound is limited to spot effects with no throb of the ship engines, roar of launched missiles or other important effects present on the CBM 64 game. Speed of play has been increased, although it is not as fast as it could have been. No change has been made to gameplay, the combination of simulation and arcade action is untouched and all the features of the C64 game are present. Both versions of *PHM Pegasus* are very much alike and while still good, the PC's presentation and graphic appearance is of an 8-bit game. *PHM Pegasus* supports CGA, EGA and Hercules MGA graphics boards.

IBM PC: OVERALL 74%

A ship in the sights of **PHM Pegasus**



VERSION UPDATE

DREAM WARRIOR

US Gold

Spectrum 48/128: £8.99
PC: £19.99

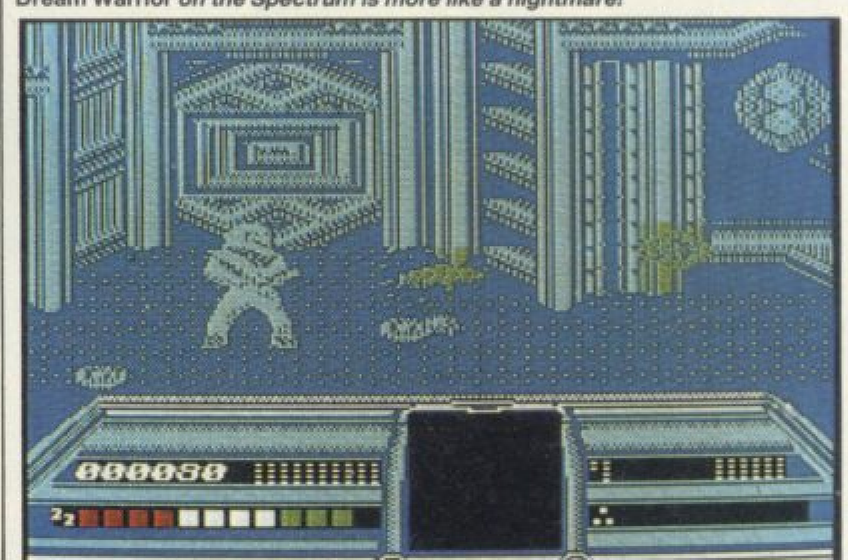
FUTURE wars are not fought physically, but in dreams. World power belongs to the sinister Focus fellowship although resistance groups exist. One such group consists of four scientists – called Asmen – who find a way to defeat Focus's most powerful weapon, the Dream Demon. Unfortunately three of the team have been discovered.

In *Dream Warrior* (reviewed in TGM**009**, CBM 64 51%), you take the role of the fourth Asman and must free your colleagues by recovering the pieces of their psychic images. Play starts in the offices of Megabuck, inhabited by psy-globes which release pods when shot. These, when collected, give access cards to lifts or safes, energy or a section of the psychic image. You travel to various dreams via the dream hopper and to succeed you must complete the three images before the captured scientists wake.

Both Spectrum and PC games are similar graphically and in gameplay. Backdrops are garish – particularly on the Spectrum – animation is not smooth and repetition abounds. Sound is functional. Neither version compares favourably to the Commodore 64/128 game.

SPECTRUM: OVERALL 27%
PC: OVERALL 29%

Dream Warrior *on the Spectrum is more like a nightmare!*



FIRE AND. . . . .ER

FIRE AND FORGET
Titus

French programming team Titus set up as a software house in the new year. Their first release was the *Out Run*-like *Crazy Cars*, on 8-bit and 16-bit formats – now Titus take the hazardous 16-bit road with *Fire And Forget*.

The Thunder Master is a four-wheel-drive vehicle equipped with a powerful V16 engine. The player drives this superfast car into enemy territories destroying tanks and helicopters with its two weapons: guided missiles and a fast-firing cannon. At the start of the game, a map of the world is shown and the player can choose which of the six battle zones to enter first.

The car travels down a road littered with obstacles such as mines, barbed-wire fences and rocks which make the car explode if hit. On the sides of the roads are bunkers and bushes, while enemy tanks zoom along from time to time.

And there's more danger in the air – missile-firing helicopters.

The road is shown in vanishing-point perspective with a background displaying the current battle zone in the distance.

The powerful Thunder Master is deficient in one area: fuel consumption. It really guzzles up the gas, but luckily the player's comrades have left supplies of Omega-Kerosene in the road. These take the form of cones and cisterns. However, fuel consumption is unrelated to speed so the player must drive as fast as possible – if fuel runs out completely the game is over.

Collision with obstacles or enemy missiles causes the Thunder Master to explode losing 10,000 points, some fuel, and valuable time. If the player reaches the end of a stage, a bonus is awarded determined by the number of cones collected. The game contains three skill levels; the harder levels contain more enemies and less fuel, making progress much harder.

The objective in *Fire And Forget* is very simple – just blast everything in sight while avoiding enemy fire. Bombing down the road at high speeds is exhilarating and the action is fast and furious, but lack of variety in gameplay makes *Fire And Forget* less than memorable.



Fire And Forget: Select your course from the global map – Amiga screen

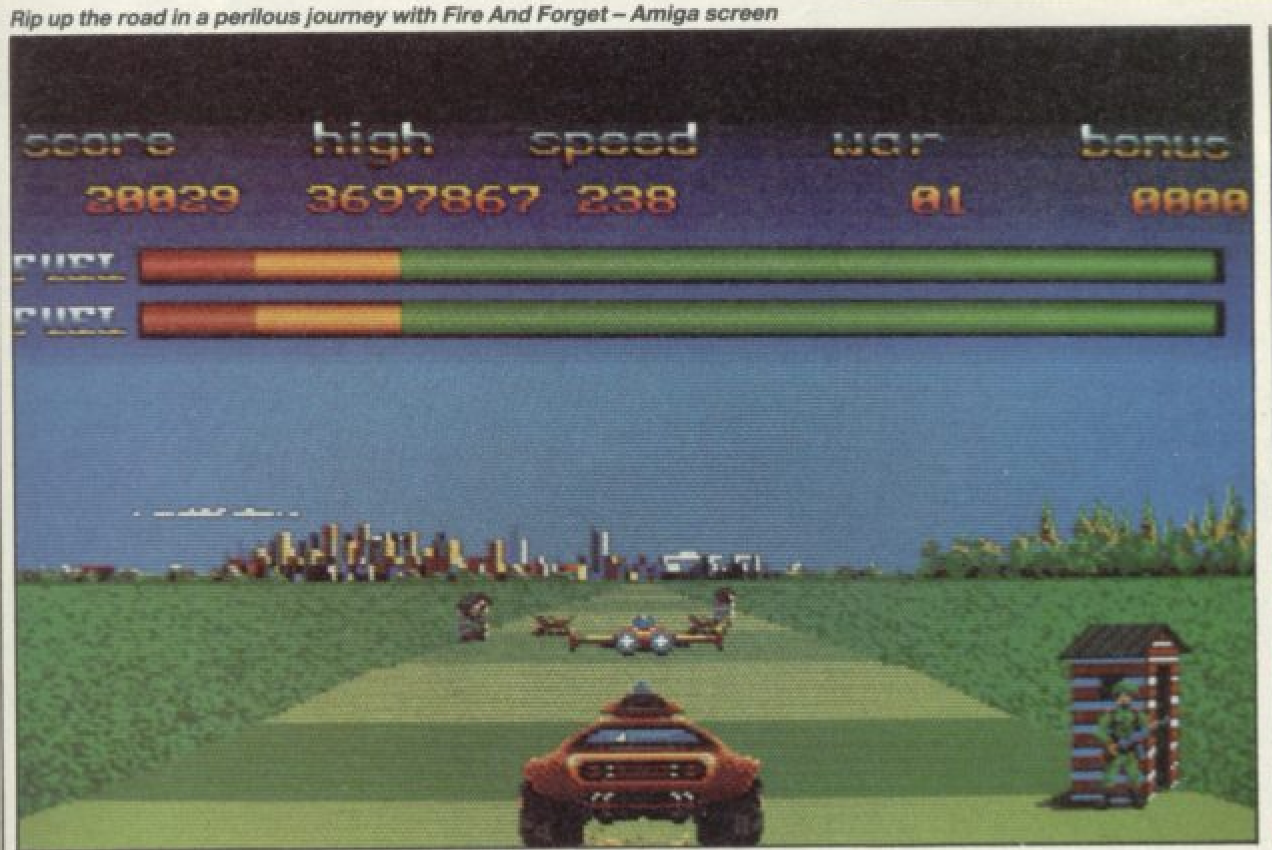


No time for a burdened conscience in Fire And Forget – ST screen

AMIGA
Diskette: £24.99
The loading screen shows a well-drawn picture of the Thunder Master and is accompanied by some catchy rock music. However, during the game itself sound is limited to an effective engine noise plus a few other spot effects. The track scrolls towards you at an alarming rate as speed builds up. The Thunder Master is detailed and makes the dust fly as it skids round the corners. Although the action is frantic, there is little else to do apart from zooming along, guns blazing. At high speeds it is almost impossible not to collide with something and if the car explodes a couple of times in a row it's almost certainly going to run out of fuel.

OVERALL 68%

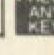
Rip up the road in a perilous journey with Fire And Forget – Amiga screen



ATARI ST
Diskette: £24.99
This is graphically very similar to the Amiga version, but the action doesn't quite get up to the same speeds and the scrolling is slightly jerky. This slower aspect damages playability, as the major appeal of *Fire and Forget* is its speed. Nevertheless, as in the Amiga version, the Thunder Master and its enemies are all detailed and attractive with plenty of colour.

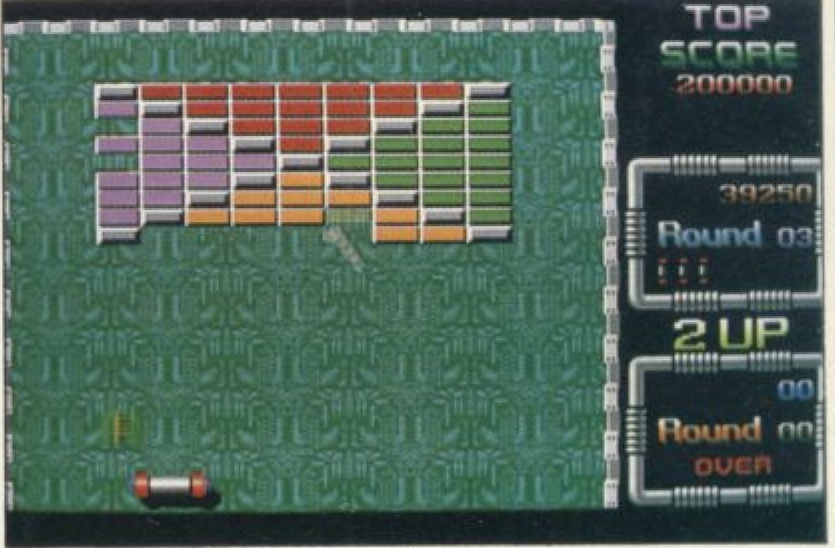
OVERALL 65%

"The action is fast and furious but lack of gameplay makes it less than memorable"



SWISS COME UP TO BAT

GIGANOID
Microdeal



If everyone out there's ready we'll play Giganoid

This *Arkanoid* clone has been programmed by Lars Bendrup for **Swiss Computer Arts**. Now Microdeal are distributing the Swiss outfit's software in the UK.

Never mind who you think you are, SCA know you're really Coman, a youngster with tremendous reactions and great courage. Your country is under the rule of the evil Grandmaster who lives in the virtually impregnable castle Giganoid, so naturally you set out to overthrow him.

To do this you must battle through the outer chambers of Giganoid taking the rather improbable form of a bat in distinctly *Breakout*-style combat.

To pass through a chamber the bat must bounce the ball so that it knocks out all the bricks. As the bricks disappear capsules are shaken loose which, if caught, can expand the player's bat, arm it with lasers, allow it to hold the ball for a few seconds, and slow the ball or divide it into two.

In the bonus round you can jump a number of chambers, depending on how confident you feel. If you select Level Four, four chambers can be jumped, but before then you must parry four balls. Choose to advance just one level and there's only one ball. Eventually you'll encounter the Gatekeeper's Head, which must be hit a certain number of times before you can advance.

While strongly resembling *Arkanoid* in both gameplay and visual presentation, the screens lack the depth of design and humour shown in that game. The bonus screens add little to the gameplay and overall this is a disappointing clone that brings nothing new to the genre.

AMIGA
Diskette: £14.95

Breakout **games seem to have become an established way of showing off the Amiga and** Giganoid **has some nice, though not remarkable, background graphics. The character graphics such as the bat and capsules are virtually indistinguishable from those in** Arkanoid**, while sound FX come from a sampled drum kit. An unremarkable and unoriginal game for** Breakout **fans only.**

OVERALL 61%

OTHER VERSIONS
No other versions planned.

"Unremarkable and unoriginal, for Breakout **fans only"**

VERSION UPDATE

BLOOD BROTHERS
Gremlin Graphics

CBM 64/128: Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99

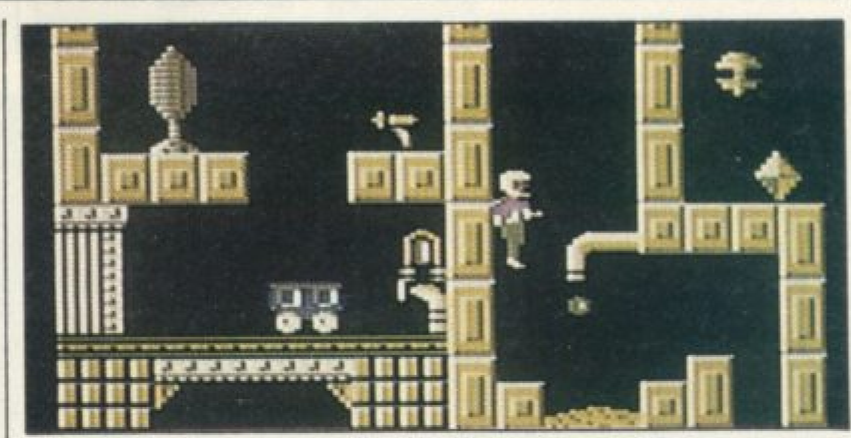
AFTER their home had been ransacked and their parents murdered, the brothers Hark and Kren set out to seek vengeance on the foul pirates responsible. Eventually they found the pirates' home world of Scorpia and decided to loot all the jewels in its mines.

This task is split into three selectable modules, as on the other 8-bit versions reviewed in TGM008, but they are very similar.

Once the game has loaded the player sees the two brothers standing at the mine entrance on two separate platforms. You can choose either to go on to the next mine or to explore the current mine for jewels, fuel and ammunition. Both brothers can go into the mine together, but with their weapons having a powerful recoil it's all too easy to be blown off a fairly crowded screen.

After the mine has been relieved of all its equipment it's time to go on to the next site.

If both brothers stand on the same platform they can attempt to reach the same mine. It's probably more efficient, however, if they split up. To get to a mine the brothers have to fly on jetbikes through a series of block-like obstacles, shooting away some of them to eventually get to the mine entrance.



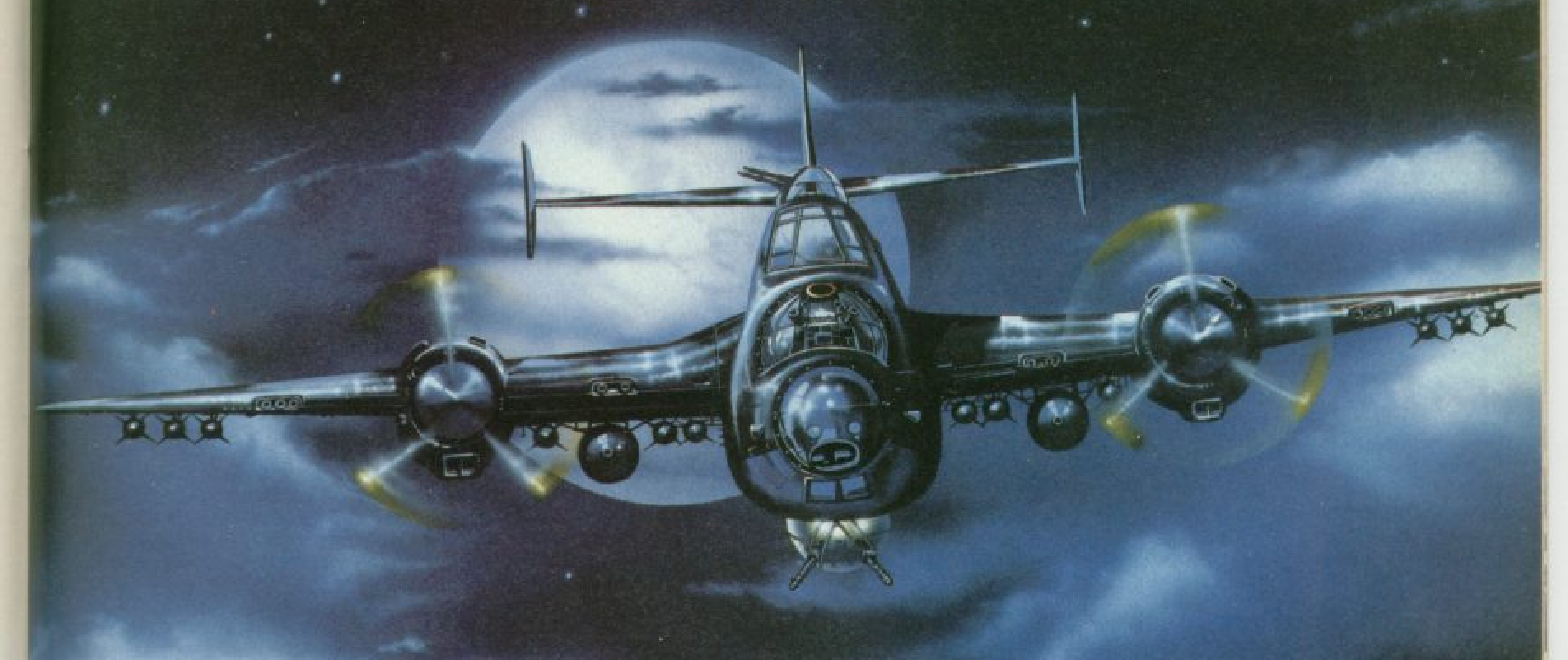
Blood Brothers *enter the platform element of the game*

If the jetbikes hit an obstacle they lose fuel and return to the starting point. If all the fuel is lost, the jetbike flies into a block and blows up, taking one of the brothers' lives.

For the Commodore 64 this tough sequence is impressive, but gameplay as a whole is disjointed and the mine sequence more irritating than challenging.

COMMODORE 64/128:
OVERALL 58%

Against a silver moon an awesome shape emerges, rumbling towards its destiny.



A classic encounter between two of the most destructive forces of their kind ever conceived by man.

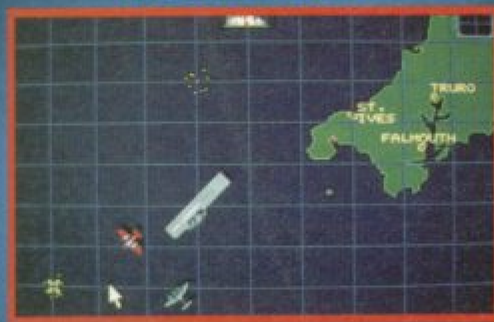
THE BISMARK... **the most fearsome battle machine to ever haunt the seas.**

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NIGHT RAIDER

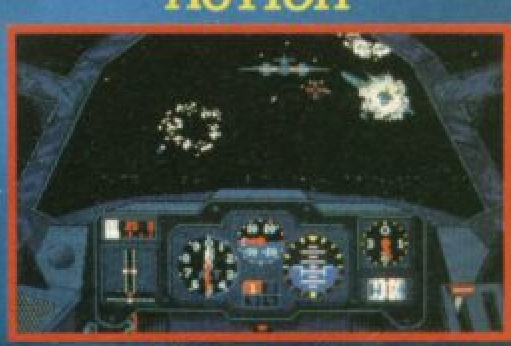
STRATEGY



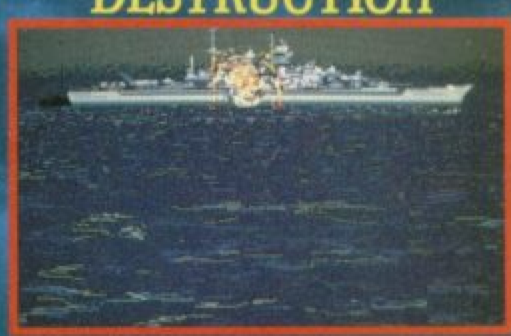
SIMULATION



ACTION



DESTRUCTION



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£9.99 tape £14.99 disk

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GREMLIN GRAPHICS SOFTWARE LIMITED

GREMLIN

Alpha House,
10, Carver Street,
Tel: 0742 753423
Sheffield S1 4FS

VERSION UPDATE

WORLD TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts

Amiga Diskette: £24.95

IT HAS taken over a year for **Paul Reiche III** and **Nicky and Evan Robinson** to create *World Tour Golf*. The first versions to appear were on the Commodore 64/128 and PC. Hot on their heels comes the Amiga game, complete with 12 international 18-hole courses.

Up to four players can take part in either a matchplay or strokeplay round. Each can alter his attributes: drive distance, accuracy and tendency, as well as recovery skill for tricky lies. Handicaps are awarded, enabling novices to compete against experts.

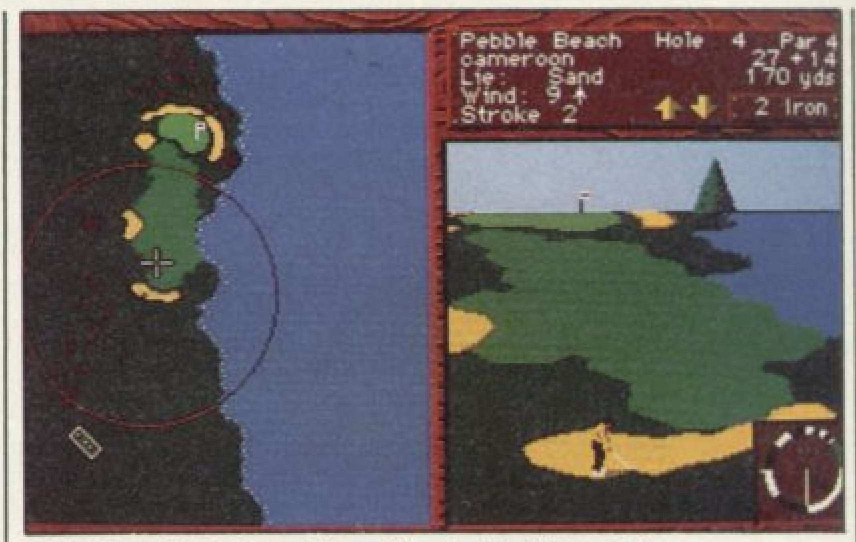
A map of the current hole is displayed on the left half of the screen, with a 3-D view of the same hole showing the golfer ready to make a shot. A full set of clubs is provided and the manual gives full details of each one's attributes.

On the map, a cross hair is automatically lined up between the golfer and the hole but can be repositioned to account for wind and obstacles. Press FIRE once to start your upswing, and again to select the shot strength.

The upswing is followed immediately by the downswing and FIRE must be pressed again to select the accuracy. The ball is then shown from both views – the one on the 3-D view tends to jitter as it fades into the distance.

When you're putting, the left-hand view changes to a close-up of the green, with arrows showing the direction of the slope.

After each hole, the scorecard displays your scores for each hole. For beginners there is a practice option allowing any single hole to be played over and over again. *World Tour Golf* also includes a course designer.



Pebble Beach is just one of the settings for World Tour Golf

Despite the many options, gameplay is very simple. Successful driving is simply a matter of timing and is soon mastered. Each green slopes only one way – there are no bumps and hills to make putting too difficult.

Sound is disappointingly sparse, with just the odd effect when the ball is hit, putted or holed. Overall the game is playable in the short term, but once the technique is mastered it becomes repetitive – even with the extra courses. *World Tour Golf* is a competent simulation but not in the same class as *Leaderboard*.

AMIGA: OVERALL 74%

VERSION UPDATE

Smash and bash 'em on Amstrad

TARGET: RENEGADE
Ocean

Amstrad CPC Cassette: £8.95, Diskette: £14.95

REVIEWED in TGM**007** on Commodore 64/128 and Spectrum formats, *Target: Renegade* now rears its head on the Amstrad CPC.

Not long after rescuing your girlfriend (as chronicled in *Renegade*), you find that your brother has been killed while investigating the activities of a nasty crook called Mr Big. So, swearing vengeance, you set off through the streets of Scumsville to beat the heck out of his henchmen before reaching the top man himself.

There are five levels, and among the baddies determined to beat you to a pulp are Hell's Angels, ladies who know a trick or two when it comes to dirty fighting, and their bosses – one of whom has a gun, so avoid him at all costs.

Although this seems like the same old run-of-the-mill thing – bash the lackeys to get at Mr Big – *Target: Renegade* is a damned playable bash-'em-up.

Graphically it's nice, with a bright-and-cheerful-looking hero kicking merry heck out of the local thugs.

And it's very entertaining – rest assured that the path to Mr Big's door isn't an easy one. Our reviewers never quite made it, but the game has enough playability to keep you trying until you do.

AMSTRAD CPC: OVERALL 82%

Keep violence off the streets, fight in the car parks!



VERSION UPDATE

SOLOMON'S KEY
US Gold

IBM PC: Diskette £19.99

TECMO'S coin-op has been converted for the PC by the people who did all the 8-bit versions, reviewed back in TGM**001**: **Probe Software**.

The objective is to make off with King Solomon's treasure, but before laying your sweaty hands on the loot you have 20 caverns to pass through. To complete each cave you must pick up a key and escape.

The heart of the game lies in solving the puzzles posed by monsters and stone blocks.

Some of the blocks are indestructible, while others can be destroyed by head-butting. Blocks can be created by waving a wand and then used to climb to the top of a cave, or placed as obstacles before a monster.

There are bonus objects and potion bottles to pick up, some of them concealed inside blocks. With a potion bottle, the player can spit fireballs, matching the monsters at their own game. Also worth finding are fairies: grab one to gain a life and boost the time limit.

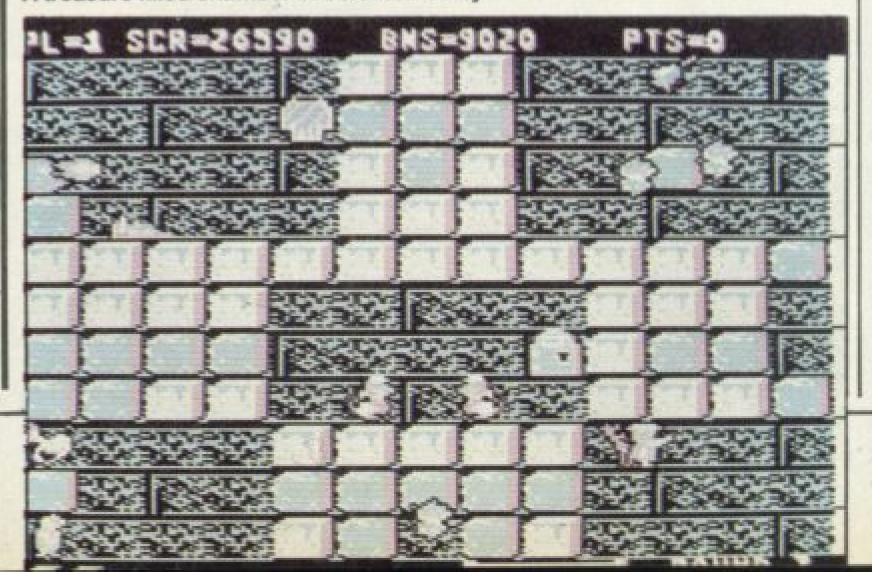
Solomon's Key was never a graphic masterpiece on the 8-bit machines, and the PC version is disappointing. Ignoring the potential of an EGA card, the colour scheme is restricted to the familiar pink, blue, white and black.

Unimaginative use of this restricted palette makes the game drab to look at and surprisingly slow, considering the PC's fast processor.

The original game was very highly rated on 8-bit machines, but despite an attractive tune the dull graphics and sluggish response make the PC version distinctly unaddictive.

IBM PC: OVERALL 32%

A treasure filled chamber in Solomon's Key



A WHOLE NEW WORLD TO PLAY IN

ALTERNATE REALITY: THE CITY

Electronic Arts

This ambitious American release came out some time ago on the Commodore 64, but due to its complexity we felt only a completely new review would do it justice for readers who haven't heard of the original, disk-only C 64 release.

After being kidnapped somewhat less than subtly by a huge alien spaceship in the middle of a city, you find yourself transported to a doorway leading to The City of Xebec's Demise. Contained within the 64 x 64 grid of this walled city are numerous creatures, plus 15 shops, 14 Taverns, 12 Guilds, seven Inns, four Smithies, three Banks and two Healers. Besides providing goods and services many of the various institutions will also provide work-if you have the necessary qualifications.

Also to be found in the city are entrances to *The Dungeon*, *The Arena*, *The Palace*, *The Wilderness*, *Revelation* and *Destiny*. These are all independently playable games, intended to form a single, enormous quest although only *The Dungeon* has yet to appear in the UK-for the C64. The principal objective of *The City* is simply to build up a saved character to be transferred to these games, and this lack of any kind of specific objective, or quest, is a weakness.

At the start of the game you can start up a new character, whose abilities are fixed by pressing the space bar as various indicators spin at the top of the screen. These abilities, or characteristics include points for Stamina, Charm, Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Skill, Hit Points and Wealth. These points determine what tactics you should use with other characters, the types of job you might be accepted for and what you might seek to improve by applying to a Guild. Jobs range from being a Bellhop at an Inn to a Bank's Coin Roller to a Tavern's Bouncer. These tasks consist simply of being there waiting for time to run out, although damage can be inflicted in risky occupations. Normally time runs at four minutes for every game hour. Fortunately during work or education at a Guild time speeds up.

GLADIATORS

Improvements in your character points or wealth are shown by the statistics at the top of the screen. Of special note are experience points which are gathered by meeting characters and tricking evil ones. After a certain number of these are gathered you progress to the next experience level. Graphics are restricted to a comparitively small band in the middle of the screen, with static graphics representing pub interiors and such like. When on the move around the city graphics of the walls and buildings move somewhat jerkily by. Any characters you might generally meet appear after a brief disk access.



Decisions to be made at Alternate Reality's city square

Besides buying food and drink to stay alive, it's also possible to buy clothing (to protect against cold and rain), a wide variety of weapons, a compass (displayed on screen), a place to sleep and even rounds of drink at a tavern. While exploring the city you'll often meet some of various inhabitants, these include Paupers, Noblemen, Gladiators, Dwarves, Ghosts and even Dragons. Nevertheless when you meet them your actions are restricted to six options; Attack, Trick, Charm, Offer an item, Leave, or Lunge. It's also possible to Cast a spell, if you've learnt to switch weapons. Obviously if you've a great many Charisma points Charm is one of the best options, however practising this on good or neutral charcter is evil and will affect your moral alignment. If you become evil through being a thief attacking innocent passers by then the game will become somewhat tougher on you, besides the obvious risks of your profession.

Datasoft's *Alternate Reality* is obviously a complex and intriguing concept which is fairly well executed on the Amiga. Spending time exploring the city, building up experience points and generally just living there is interesting but the lack of an overall quest is irksome, while plodding around the city looking for work can soon become repetitive. *The City* will obviously appeal to RPG enthusiasts. Whether it will succeed with a wider audience is open to question however.

Like getting money out of a stone,



AMIGA
Diskette: £19.95

The original C64 game required both sides of two disks and required lots of disk-swapping. The Amiga version makes do with just one disk which is sizeable blessing on its own. Graphically the game pretties up the basic Commodore designs, but it is never startling and sound is limited to spot effects and the occasional tune. By comparison with *Dungeonmaster*, the crudity of the very 8-bit presentation is apparent. A reasonable conversion more than a startling rewrite in short.

OVERALL 70%

OTHER VERSIONS

Previously distributed by U.S.Gold on the Commodore 64/128, Atari 800 and ST, Datasoft have now switched to Grandslam who have currently on release just the Amiga and PC (£24.95) versions.

"Jobs range from being a Bellhop at an inn to a tavern's Bouncer"

SUCK THIS

HOTSHOT
Addictive Games

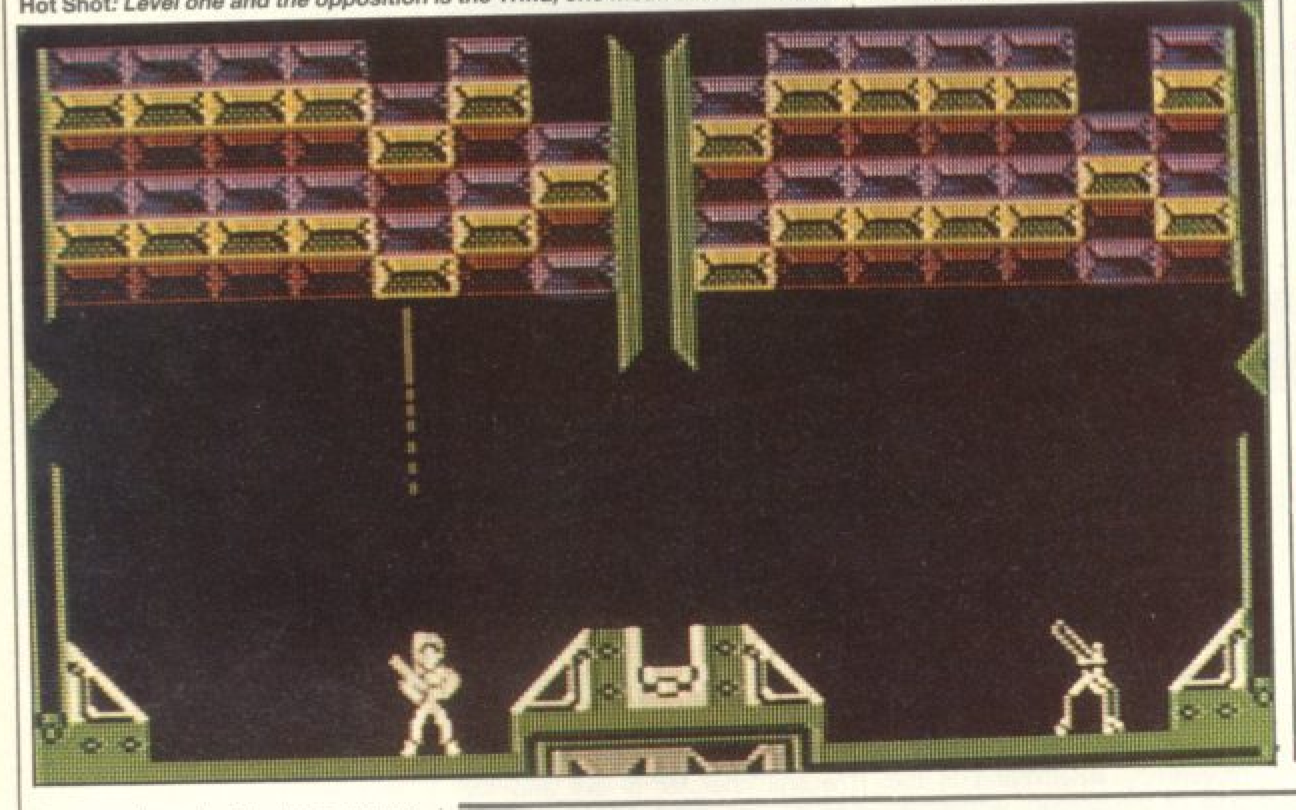
As reported in the previews in TGM **008** *HotShot* comes from **Maxwell Technologies**, a new development house run by ex-Mastertronic manager **John Maxwell**. *HotShot* is their first project and is a combination of pinball, breakout and vacuum cleaning.

Set in a future sports arena *HotShot* is ideally designed for two players, with a two-on-two game or one player against the computer. There are five screens to the game in full, with a bonus level in between each. *HotShot* is drowning them. The bonus is a strightforward, but tricky, pinball game.

Most screens are set on a time limit in which to amass a high score. If a high enough score is achieved the player goes forward into the next arena after the bonus round.

There are a variety of characters to control including a humanoid, a squidgy monster, and a tripod .

The whole concept of *HotShot* takes the ever-popular *Breakout* clone a step further and control and fast reactions are more demanding than in any other bat 'n' ball game. Graphics are simplistic but not disappointing because *HotShot*'s attraction remains in the addictive and challenging gameplay rather than in the visual content.



Hot Shot: *Level one and the opposition is the Trifid, one mean sucker – Commodore screen*

always played with two players and the objective is to score more points than your opponent by knocking bricks out. The ball which bounces around the screen subject is subject to gravity and is controlled by pinball bumpers and flippers.

BALL CONTROL

The players control of the ball is through the graviton guns strapped to backpacks. When holding down fire the vacuum is switched on and by using the eight direction movements to position the graviton gun the ball is sucked towards the player. The player then has three seconds to reposition the gun in the appropriate direction, release fire and send the ball flying before you he blows up.

Each of the five arena screens are different, ranging from a simple *Breakout* style to one in which the screen is split down the middle where the objective is to pump water into your opponents half by blasting water bricks and

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette £9.99
Diskette: £12.99

Apart from the gameplay the additional elements are minimal. Plain and simple graphics may appear ineffective on the Commodore, but this leaves the action clear. Sound, similarly, is merely functional bells 'n' whistles.
Presentation ranks highly though, the introduction screen is well laid out and options are easily selected; there is even a small animated commentator giving instructions. Overall, *HotShot* is well designed and provides considerable originality.

OVERALL 76%

OTHER FORMATS

A preview of the Atari ST version has been seen and favourably received. It features exactly the same gameplay but with better graphics and more animation in the characters. The Spectrum version is pratically identical to the Commodore, but nothing has been seen of the impending Amstrad and Amiga versions.

"control and fast reactions are more demanding than in any other bat 'n' ball game"

VERSION UPDATE

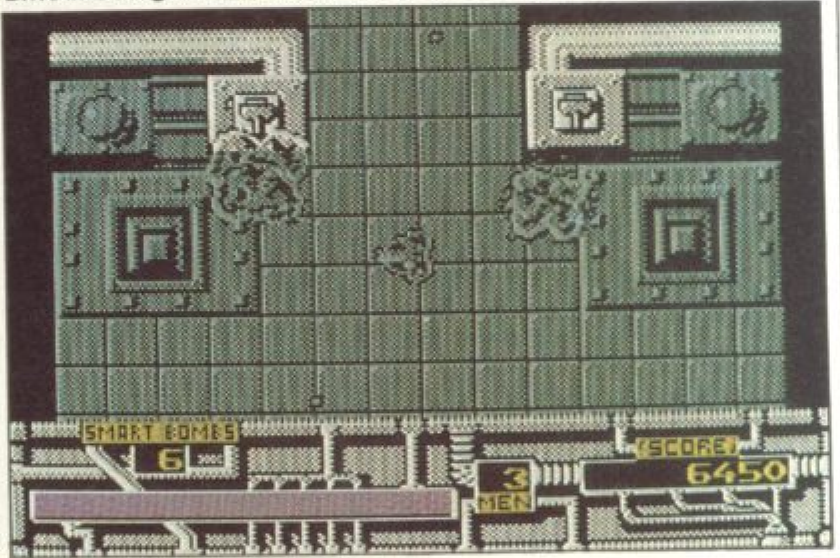
MARAUDER
Hewson

Spectrum 48/128: Cassette £7.99, Diskette: £12.99

MARAUDER is yet another vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up full of mindless violence, but it is of the high quality now expected from Hewson. The Battlecar itself is simply animated, although it looks more like a spaceship. The backgrounds are mostly monochromatic but the graphics are well shaded. There is plenty of sound on the 128K version with various tunes at the front end and one during play – this may be swapped for sound effects. The gameplay is simple: blast everything in sight! The only exception is the shooting of the coloured beacons where care is needed not to lose a life or reverse the car's controls. Annoyingly the shields only work intermittently but the game remains playable and addictive. A very good, if not outstanding, blast-'em-up.

SPECTRUM 48/128: OVERALL 71%

Drive into danger with Hewson's vertically scrolling blaster Marauder



IT'S MY PARTY AND I'LL DIE IF I WANT TO

THE BARD'S TALE 3: THE THIEF OF FATE

Electronic Arts

Interplay, the programming team responsible for *The Bard's Tale* series, have gone from success to success, now upgrading themselves to the rank of full-scale software house, although their product is still marketed in the UK by Electronic Arts.

Skara Brae, centre stage of the adventures of *The Bard's Tale Volume I*, is no more. Following the adventurer's victories over Mangar and Lagoth Zanta, the price has now been paid as the evil God Tarjan wreaked his revenge on the city and its populace, reducing Skara Brae to ruins. The God's unholy horde of undead and legions of evil creatures swept through the streets killing all in their way and raising them all to the ground. To put it mildly this was bad news. What came next was worse.

Tarjan's plans for domination were uncovered and included conquest of the six cities of the wilderness with the subsequent plummet into chaos of the entire land as Tarjan tightened his evil grip.

The hope of the land rests with a single group of adventurers, who must cross not only the wilderness but also the seven dimensions of Tarjan's domain.

All the tasks, trials and tests encountered in the first two volumes of *The Bard's Tale* are now minor problems compared with the threat of Tarjan. The price of freedom from Tarjan's evil rule will be dear but not as dear as the cost to the land should the adventurers fail.

The Bard's Tale 3: Thief Of Fate begins in the refugee camp near the ruins of Skara Brae. This is the equivalent of the Guild in Volumes 1 and 2. From here the player can create a group of adventurers from scratch, use a pre-generated party stored in memory or transfer characters from the previous *Bard's Tale* games, the *Ultima* series by Origin or the *Wizardry* trilogy. Each character can be of either sex, any of seven races from humans to hobbits, elves to half-orcs.

Top of the class

Thirteen character classes form the backbone of each adventurer's skills and capabilities. At the start of the game only eight classes are open to selection, the other five classes requiring experience and knowledge to be built up before they become available. Among the more advanced classes are Geomancers, Chronomancers and other high-level sorcerers. The Chronomancer in particular is a specialist magician who is practically useless at almost everything but casting advanced spells but without whom the game cannot be completed.

As well as the 13 classes (many of which owe a debt to *Advanced Dungeons And Dragons*), each character uses attributes of strength, intelligence, dexterity and luck. As the title suggests, luck and fate play a significant part in the game, so don't expect an easy ride just because you've transferred across super-powerful characters from the first two *Bard's Tale* volumes.

The Thief Of Fate not surprisingly follows in the established tradition of the previous games in the series. The screen display is split into three sections. The lower section contains the statistics of the group, their armour class, hit points, character condition and number of spell points currently available to magicians, conjurers and other spell-casting adventurers. The upper right section displays information on attacking creatures, objects in the immediate vicinity, encounters and combat with creatures as they happen. The upper left section displays a graphic of the view ahead, be it the wilderness, a dungeon corridor, objects to pick up or more likely a creature to kill.

Progress through the land is made in a *Lords Of Midnight* style: turn in the direction the party wishes to go and move forward. Trees, rocks and other features of the wilderness draw near. Day turns to night and with it come the creatures of the dark, and with over 500 different wilderness and dungeon denizens Tarjan will have plenty to spare to provide problems for the adventurers. Some will even join the party, for a price.

At the start, new characters will have no experience, minimum gold and no knowledge of the area. A map of the land is provided with the package and an auto-map facility is available for dungeon exploration. An introductory dungeon is present near the Refugee Camp (the starting location) for novices to get used to the game and its intricacies.

Expanding bard

Many of the features of the previous *Bard's Tale* programs have been expanded. As well as more monsters, there are 84 dungeons to enter, eight songs for the Bard to sing and 111 types of spell to cast.

Play Bard's Tale II for a quick spell

Spells play as much a part in the game as swordplay, the conjurers, magicians, wizards and other spell-casters having seven levels of spell to build up, ranging from lesser first-level passive light spells such as MAFL and working up to seventh-level, totally offensive spells. The most powerful spells like the aptly-named NUKE have to be found – not surprisingly they're in the deepest dungeons and not lying around for mere beginners to find and misuse. Each spell is cast by entering the spell's four-letter identifying name.

Each character can carry up to 12 pieces of equipment. Armour, shields, weapons, potions, gems, magic items, staffs, rings and other objects normally found in the well-used *Advanced Dungeons And Dragons* style of game await the brave adventurer. However death looms over the party always, so watch your step.

Electronic Arts could be accused of stretching the ideas in *The Bard's Tale* a little too far by releasing a third volume but this isn't the case as *The Thief Of Fate* goes even further to create the ultimate computerised roleplaying game. It has incorporated the best ideas from the previous games, improved on them and expanded the playing area considerably; it's still just as easy to get lost as it was in the earlier games.

The challenge Volume 3 offers is more than enough for *Bard's Tale* veterans. An inexperienced adventurer's best bet would be to try Volume 1 first. The starter dungeon is a good introduction to computerised fantasy RPG in itself.

COMMODORE 64/128
Diskette: £16.95
Presentation is far superior to the previous *Bard's Tale* Volumes. The beginning depicts the Bard sitting by a fire setting the scene for the game complete with excellent graphic animation. The animation extends into the game itself, with some graphics which are nothing short of remarkable considering the game's size. The improvement in graphics and presentation is brought down a peg or two by the lack of anything more than functional sound. Disk accessing inevitably occurs with every encounter but thankfully no more than a few seconds. The Thief Of Fate **is a considerable improvement all round, best of the series yet.**

OVERALL 84%

OTHER VERSIONS

No word yet on conversions, but the previous two games in the series have been converted (or are in the process of being converted) to most popular home computers. It can only be a matter of time but there are no release dates yet.

"The challenge Volume 3 offers is more than enough for Bard's Tale **veterans"**



The conversion of Atari's racy coin-op **Road Blasters** *hits home*

TERRORISM ON TARMAC

The Atari coin-op of *Roadblasters* has had a most unfortunate time, much of it due to the presence of *Out Run* in the arcades, which put Atari's game in the shade even though it had considerably more depth of gameplay. Despite this turn of events, US Gold weren't put off and the results of their licence acquisition are now coming to light. *Roadblasters* was programmed by **Martin Webb** with the graphics by **David Webb** under the name of **Amazing Products Ltd**. Once again **David Whittaker** has provided sound effects and tunes.

In the future, the roads are no longer safe, in fact the roads are very deadly. Driving means armament, weapons and a good trigger finger. This is the world of the *Roadblasters*.

The game is played from a *Pole Position* viewpoint as the player drives the car at breakneck speed through the roads of the future. The freeway isn't exactly free to drive on as other road-users are out in force, all of them out to put the brakes on your journey. Stinger cars, motorcycles, Command cars with tank-like armour and highly manoeuvrable Rat Jeeps are out on the roads. Running into the back of any of them doesn't do the car any good – it may take out the opposition but it also loses you a car in the process.

The road itself is deadly with mines strewn across the tarmac just waiting for a tyre to make contact and puddles of spilt acid which spin the car through a complete circle temporarily upsetting the player's control. To add to the already rather more–than–minor troubles, gun emplacements by the side of the road fire at you as you roar past. Trees, boulders and other obstacles by the roadside prove fatal if collided with.

Cruising along

Starting off with only an on-board cannon bolted onto the roof, your car could soon end up on the scrap heap unless extra arms are collected. Not surprisingly, from time to time a support jet crosses the road and drops extra-ability items which give a better chance of survival when collected. These include a UZ rapid-fire cannon, a speed-accelerating Nitro Injector, Electro Shields providing bullet-proof, mine-proof, car-collision-proof protection and a Cruise Missile destroying everything on screen when launched.

As well as the enemy vehicles to watch out for, fuel is also a concern in play. If the car runs out before it gets to the next stage it's the end of the line. Running over fuel pods conveniently left lying in the road puts some petrol in the tank, while passing the halfway mark in each route fills up the main tank. Once the main tank runs dry, though, the reserve tank quickly follows. Running out of fuel or lives naturally ends the game.

Roadblasters is played over 50 stages with three skill levels. The game is multiload but with ten stages loaded in at a time it's a small price to pay. Every 10 stages, you get the choice of one of three routes of increasing difficulty.

With classic racing games like *Pitstop 2* showing what the Commodore can do, *Roadblasters* is surprisingly poor by comparison. There's very little impression of speed, the road bends in a series of steps rather than one smooth motion and the crudely-defined approaching vehicles move through too few frames of animation to give the game sufficient realism. Avoiding cars, mines and toxic spills at full speed is near-impossible as the obstacles don't use the full horizon, instead appearing halfway and moving sedately and neatly in-lane toward you.

Roadblasters saving grace is its playability. The car is highly manoeuvrable within the limiting confines of the road and it can really move when it has to.

COMMODORE 64/128 Cassette: £9.99, Diskette: £14.99

Ten-stage-at-a-time loading is a good idea as it keeps the flow of the game going. Unfortunately the tracks are very bland and bare in appearance, the gameplay is repetitive, slow and doesn't have enough of the coin-op's fast action to make a worthy conversion.

OVERALL 47%

OTHER VERSIONS

To be released for Spectrum 48/128: cass £8.99, +3 disk £12.99, Amstrad CPC: cass £9.99, disk £14.99, Amiga: £24.99 and Atari ST: £19.99. DJL Software, programmers of Martech's racing game Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix **are writing the Spectrum and Amstrad conversions with Probe responsible for ST and Amiga versions. Following their successful conversion of** Out Run, **Probe's 16-bit conversions should be worth waiting for.**

"Roadblasters **saving grace is its playability"**

VERSION UPDATE

PANDORA

Firebird

Amiga: £19.95

NOW making an appearance on the Amiga, *Pandora* is a deceptive game with its arcade presentation but strong adventure overtones. The Commodore 64 game was reviewed in TGM **007** (81%) and the Atari ST (79%) in TGM **008**.

You're wandering around the forbidding ship Pandora searching for a reason for the ship's presence and, if hostile, a means to destroy it. Interaction with the ship's crew is the key to success – a surreal bunch including a *Dark Star*-like ball creature on legs, a priest, pianist, squash player, killer wasp and other equally strange people. Crew members often trade items they're carrying in return for other specified objects. ID cards can be picked up from dead crew, allowing access to other regions of the ship, clearance to pass security droids and entry to crew quarters protected by forcefields.

Even in the high technology future, primitive bartering is still going strong. Failing bartering for objects a good old bout of fisticuffs can prove just as effective.

No different to the ST game in presentation or gameplay, Amiga *Pandora* is a disappointment, for no change has been made to the ease of the game or the ship layout. The majority of objects are red herrings offering little beyond a simple challenge, although to be fair, the game is interesting as an alternative to the standard arcade/adventure games beginning to show themselves on 16-bit machines.

A point in its favour is the title music which on the Amiga is very good indeed, and the simple but effective use of increasing volume as the player draws near the pianist. The background graphics are neatly done, presentation is generally high, but what lets it down is the unsettling scrolling and crude animation of the main characters. Both of these problems could have been rectified by taking advantage of the Amiga's stronger capabilities.

AMIGA: OVERALL 72%

Adventure and exploration in an unknown craft in **Pandora**



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SHOW DOWN OVER FIGHTERTOWN

SKYCHASE
Imageworks/Mirrorsoft

The new label from Mirrorsoft, **Imageworks** has some strong 8- and 16-bit titles which should make the shops for the Autumn and Christmas period. Among them *Speedball* from the **Bitmap Brothers**, authors of *Xenon*, a **Tony Crowther/David Bishop** product *Fernandez Must Die* and a potentially excellent 16-bit strategy/arcade-action solid 3-D game with the working title of *Mainframe*. *Skychase* was written by **Maxis**, a specialist 16-bit American programming team.

The blue skies over Fightertown, USA are the imaginary setting for *Skychase*, where modern-day knights of the air take part in aerial duels as part of their jet-fighter training.

Skychase is nothing more than air combat do-or-die in the sky. What gives it depth is the extensive array of options available to the would-be pilots. Each player can choose to fly one of four American fighters (from the F-18 to the F-14), two Soviet jets (either the MiG-27 or MiG-31) or, for those lighter moments, a paper plane.

Other aircraft-specific parameters relate to the performance of the chosen jet and its weaponry. Fuel, cannon ammunition and the number of missiles can be set to anything from minimal to unlimited. The areas of missile lock, accuracy of bullets, the length of delay in trigger timing when firing missiles and G-force tolerance can all be defined to suit each player's skill level.

Other non-plane, redefinable game-specific options include the size of the playing area for dogfighting, the computer opponent's skill level, the number of players participating (from zero to two – the former option being effectively a demonstration) and the flyby option whereby if a plane is destroyed, it either continues the game where it left off or both planes are taken back to a head-on attack profile.

Odd ball

The view from the cockpit is wireframe, with the ground below made up of a series of grids. The planes themselves are represented in fast-moving vector graphics. The joystick is used to fly the planes with two keys to control the throttle.

The cockpit display for each plane is identical and is more functional than authentic in appearance. The programmers have kept a Head Up Display out of the game, primarily to retain the feel of fast dogfight action without making the program too much of a simulation.

The only displays which appear through the window are the cannon sight and missile locking sights, the latter locking on when in a good position to engage the target. Once locked-on pressing the fire button twice launches a missile (oddly depicted as an Amiga ball).

Speed, height, throttle, fuel and ammunition indicators are shown along the bottom half of each side of the screen with three small attitude displays conveniently situated next to the cockpit window. A map of the playing area is shared by both players, with each aircraft shown in a different colour. Flying off the very edge of the map or crashing into the ground destroys the plane and returns both aircraft to the head-on attack situation.

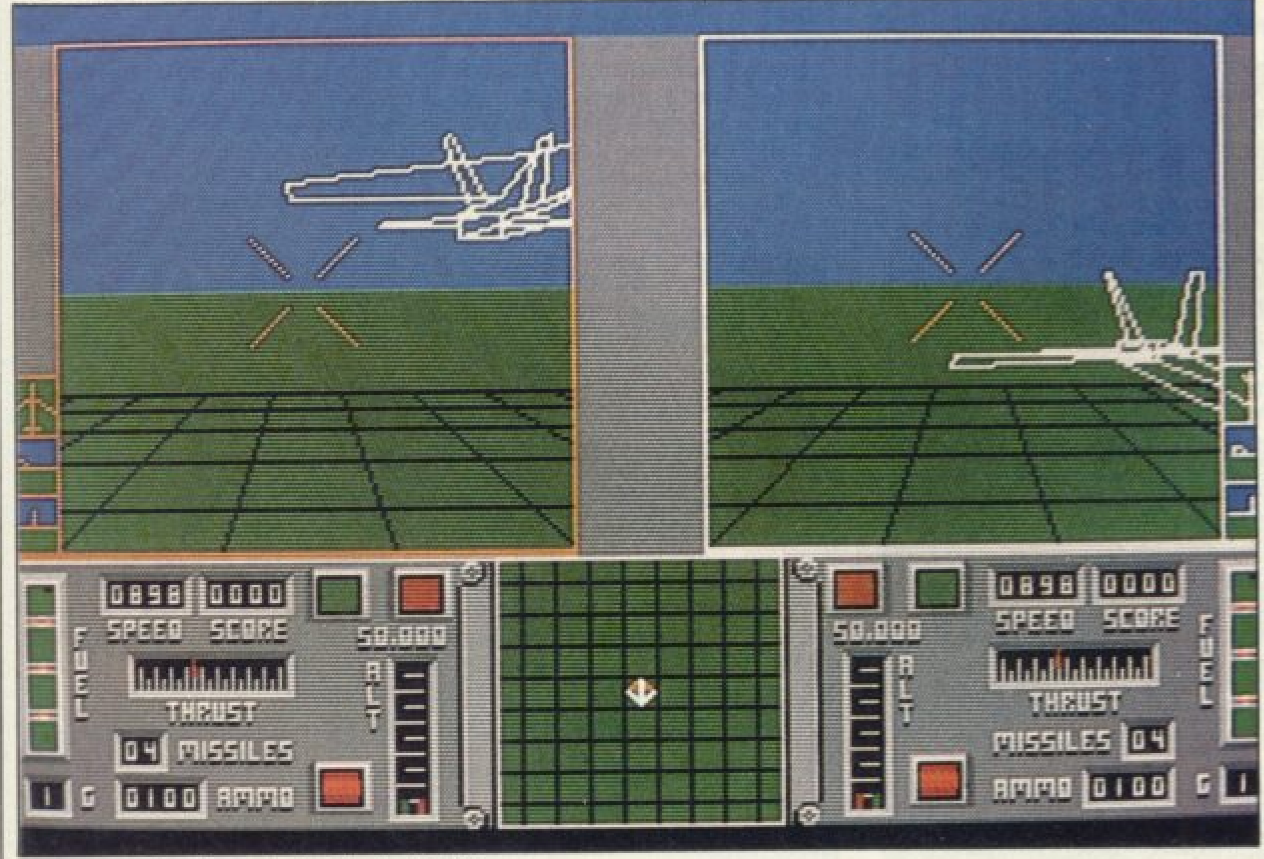
Each player has an infinite number of aircraft but limited fuel, once this runs out, the game is over and the winner is the player with the most points.

While not using the displays of a conventional simulation, the performance statistics of the aircraft in the game have been accurately re-created – this is reflected in the game tactics that each player (and the computer opponent) employs. During combat, the amount of ammunition left, fuel levels, height, attitude and energy status are constant factors to take into consideration, keeping players on their toes throughout the game.

Immediate thoughts on booting up *Skychase* are how similar it is to Ocean's 8-bit combat game *Top Gun*, particularly the split-screen view from each jet. This similarity extends to the use of wireframe graphics and methods of play, with each player using three dimensions of airspace to gain the advantage.

On the minus side, it's very easy to become disorientated during knife-edge combat at close quarters. The featureless sky and simple ground graphics do little to help. Also when one player gets into a good kill position behind the other, it is very difficult for the unfortunate target to elude his pursuer, this often leads to rapid loss of life.

While *Skychase* is simple in presentation and execution, it allows for personal tactics to be introduced easily. The large number of redefinable variables and the option for unique strategies in air combat make *Skychase* an excellent game. The depth and playability should keep Amiga air aces playing for ages.



Devious double player destruction in Sky Chase

AMIGA
£19.99

Skychase **could have been improved by using solid graphics and enhancing the sound, however, as it stands, it remains incredibly exciting to play. While satisfying in one player mode, the real fun and challenge is to be had is with two players. The only thing missing is the option for modem play, and an ejector seat!**

OVERALL 87%

OTHER VERSIONS

Skychase **is to make an imminent appearance on the ST also priced at £19.99**

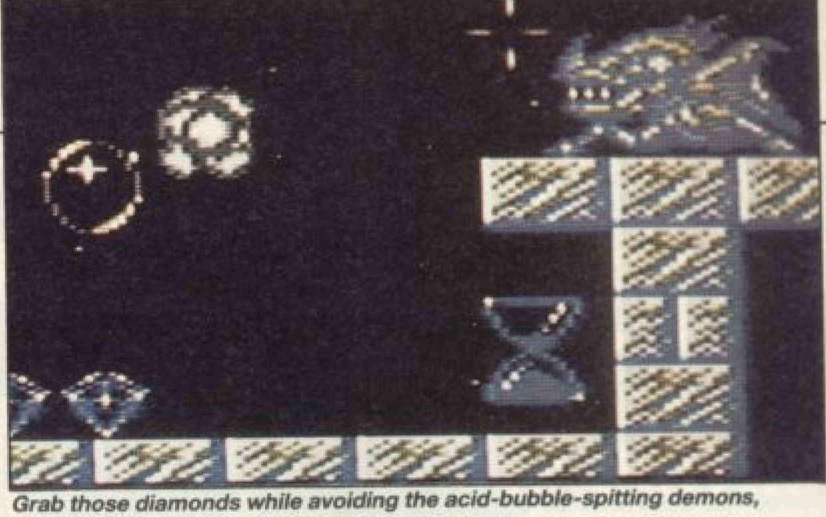
"The redefinable variables and option for unique strategies make Skychase **an excellent game."**

PRESS ANY KEY

DIAMONDS ARE FOR NETHER

NETHERWORLD

Hewson


Grab those diamonds while avoiding the acid-bubble-spitting demons, and don't forget the hourglass!

Author of **English Software**'s *Octopolis* raises his Finnish head once again. This time Jukka Tapanimaki codes for Hewson with his rendition of a horizontally-scrolling *Boulderdash*-type shoot-'em-up. Jorri Olkkonen wrote the music, a name which may be unfamiliar at present but, if the *Netherworld* sound track is a measure of his work, one which we shall soon know well.

This planet of purgatory is a place where the forces of good and evil battle for domination a place locked in eternal conflict.A place in which you are trapped.

Diamonds are the key to your freedom. To gain these sparkling means of escape, you need to battle the denizens of Netherworld. Demons, mines, acid bubbles, tormented souls and alien generators all do their best to prevent you reaching your objective of escape.

Netherworld consists of 24 levels and your task is to collect the required number of diamonds within the time limit allowed. Should you be successful you may exit to the next level via the teleport system.

Your wheel-like ship (reminiscent of the craft used in *Space Patrol*) is armed with unlimited four-directional lasers. The eight-way scrolling maze in which you do battle with aliens is made up of walls and many strange obstacles that hinder your progress.

What's mine is hours

The demons that lurk within the land spit bubbles, some of which when hit provide objects that may be picked up . These can take the form of bonus points, extra speed, brick smashers, mysterious bonus', shields and extra lives. Rocks abound and may be manoeuvred to deflect scanner and bounder mines on to change walls to create new diamonds. Circular transporters speedily zap you around the level and secret paths through seemingly solid walls provide access to encased diamonds. Extra time is awarded for picking up hour glasses.

The information panel at the bottom of the screen indicates the number of demon killers available, the number of brick smashes possible, your score, level, time remaining and number of lives. Shield power, at its peak, takes twelve hits before one of your three lives is lost.

Completion of a stage results in an intermission screen, during which, under a time limit, a scanner mine is guided to collide with a changing wall to provide an extra life .

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.99
Diskette: £14.99

The theme music is incredible. Sounding like sampled guitar, its 'heavy' style deters one from pressing the fire button to begin play. The scrolling is beautifully smooth although the graphics lack colour and detail. Sound FX are disappointing and your ship's bullets are not at all impressive. The very tough time limit allowed and the progressively harder levels are evenly balanced by the incentive to play on.

OVERALL 78%

OTHER VERSIONS

By the end of August versions are promised for the three main 8-bit machines, Cassette: £9.99 (Spectrum Cassette: £7.99), Diskette: £14.99, Amiga and Atari ST Diskettes £19.99

"Eight-way scrolling maze in which you do battle with aliens undreamed of."

VERSION UPDATE

JET

SubLOGIC

Atari ST: £39.95

WITH the news of SubLOGIC expanding their foothold in the UK, comes *Jet* for the Atari ST. Reviewed on the Amiga in TGM006, it gained sky-soaring mark of 89%.

Jet, the follow up to *Flight Simulator 2*, is a combination of air combat and flight simulator. It features the now familiar US Air Force/Navy combination of the F-16 Fighting Falcon and F-18 Hornet. A ground attack and dogfight mission can be flown in each aircraft with an extra combined attack mission for pilots of the F-16. The ground attack mission in the F-18 involves destroying missile cruisers while, in the F-16, the task is to destroy cooling towers, bridges, shipyards, an airbase and other land-based targets. The aerial opponents are MiG-21 Fishbeds and MiG-23 Floggers, along with surface-to-air and Atoll air-to-air missiles.

Ten skill levels are selectable, with five types of weapon together with the standard *Flight Simulator* extras of exterior views, maps, levels of magnification and other features and that only SubLOGIC would think to include, such as attitude indicators and spotter plane views.

Jet offers a multiplayer option which enables two players to fly against one another through modem links. The simulation is also compatible with *Flight Simulator* scenery disks (although the jet is not armed so you won't be able to destroy national landmarks) – refer below.

Graphically there is very little to distinguish the ST from the Amiga version, the comparisons mirroring the 16-bit conversions of *Flight Simulator 2*. The only differences being the speed of execution and rate of frame update. Sound is generally the lacklustre noise of the jet's engines, cannon fire and explosions – which lack the sonic bite present in the Amiga game.

The graphics are more functional than detailed, using the bare structure of the plane for representation (presumably to keep up program speed) and look dated when compared to *Carrier Command* or *Interceptor*.

Control and speed of the jet is slightly faster than on the Amiga but the movement is not as smooth, leading to some large steps in flight movement. The combination of extremely sensitive fly-by-wire control and high rate of execution makes the plane virtually uncontrollable when it goes into a spin, pulls high-G turns or makes violent aerial manoeuvres. The uneven frame update and over-responsive controls leave the game difficult to play.

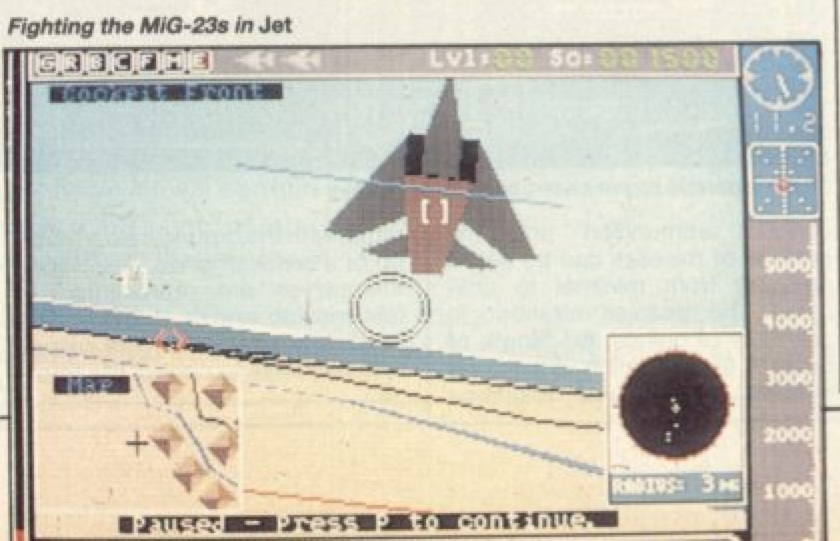
ATARI ST: OVERALL 78%

WESTERN EUROPE SCENERY DISK

SubLOGIC
ATARI ST: £19.95

FOR use with *Flight Simulator 1* and *2* and *Jet* from subLOGIC, comes the scenery disk of Western Europe. The data disk includes much of southern England and Wales, northern and mid-France, south-west Germany and the area around Moscow (for those pilots wanting to imitate Mathias Rust). The landscape has many famous national, landmarks: the Houses of Parliament, Stonehenge, St Paul's Cathedral, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Arc de Triomphe, Munich Stuttgart, the Kremlin, Red Square and most major runways, mountains and rivers around Europe.

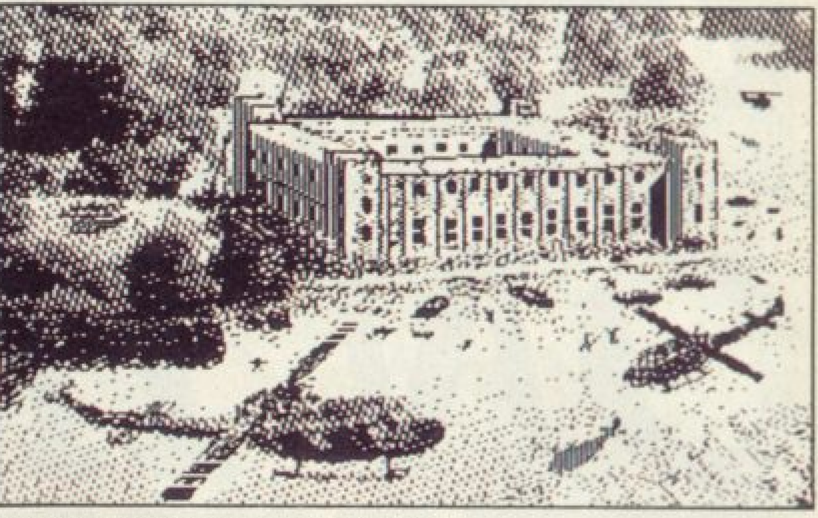
Fighting the MiG-23s in Jet



WHERE'S RAY GONE?

THE PRESIDENT IS MISSING

Cosmi/MicroProse



The site of the terrorist act – Liechtenstein

Cosmi have made a name for themselves by producing *Beyond The Forbidden Forest*, *Super Huey II* and *Chernobyl* – all for **US Gold**. *The President Is Missing* is their first product for MicroProse.

June 6: The President of the United States is attending a secret NATO meeting with ten European heads of state in Liechtenstein, when terrorists strike and kidnap those officials present. The nine demands made by the terrorists include the destruction of the state of Israel, the reestablishment of Palestine as a republic, elimination of western military and industrial presence in the Arab world and the Nationalisation of all oil producing facilities in Islamic erritories. All totally unreasonable necessitating the speedy return of the kidnapped.

The central computer of the Counter Terrorist branch of the CIA is simulated in *The President Is Missing*, and you are the special investigator charged with finding those taken.

The game is played via four menus, accessed by their command names FILES, AGENT, CODES and COMMS (communications). These commands, and other necessary text, are entered in a wórk area at the bottom of the computer screen, via the keyboard. At the top is a message window, displaying information as it is received and a status line giving the current date, time, and case name. Indicators flash when information from the State Department, a field agent, or general bulletin source is available, and this is received by the press of a key. These display areas are often overlayed with menus needed to gain information to aid your inquiries.

A CAD

Information is first found using the FILES menu. Suspect data is held under SUBJECT, and accessing this gives a list of 38 people. The name, status, place and date of birth, and personal details of each person is given, with a digitised photo and history of their education, career, and military background. Photographic pictures have matching information, and can be examined in detail with a magnify function. DOCUMENT, allows viewing of information concerning the events on June 6, and RECORDS gives useful miscellaneous data. CASE FILES loads and saves clues to and from your disk. REPORTS and CONFIDENTIAL give perusal of Secret Service agent reports and confidential coded files, needing special clearance, respectively.

An encoded piece of received information can be decoded, to varying degrees of success, by the CAD (Cryptographic Analysis and Deciphering) section of the CIA from the Codes menu. The investigator can attempt decoding him or herself by entering code with a variable deciphering parameter, but intelligence and ingenuity is needed to reap rewards.

Once, through investigation, evidence is gathered, a suspect can be detained and questioned by the State Department, or a building searched by them, with the two options under the COMMS menu.

Many clues can be found on a 30-minute audio cassette, given as part of the game packaging. This contains the sounds of TV/radio, reports, morse code messages, the President at the kidnapper's hideout, phone taps and police evidence.

COMMODORE 64/128 Diskette: £12.95

Sonics are near nonexistant and constant disk swapping quickly becomes a bore. Nevertheless, the depth and interest within The President Is Missing **is such that those of you with an adventure bent should get a great deal of enjoyment from attempting to solve the dastardly crime.**

OVERALL 75%

OTHER VERSIONS

As you read this, a PC version is being released: £24.95. Future plans include a Commodore 64/128 cassette version: £9.95, to be followed by Amiga and Atari ST at £24.95

"Those of you with an adventure bent should get a great deal of enjoyment"

VERSION UPDATE

ARCTICFOX

Electronic Arts

Amstrad CPC: Cassette: £8.95, Diskette: £14.95

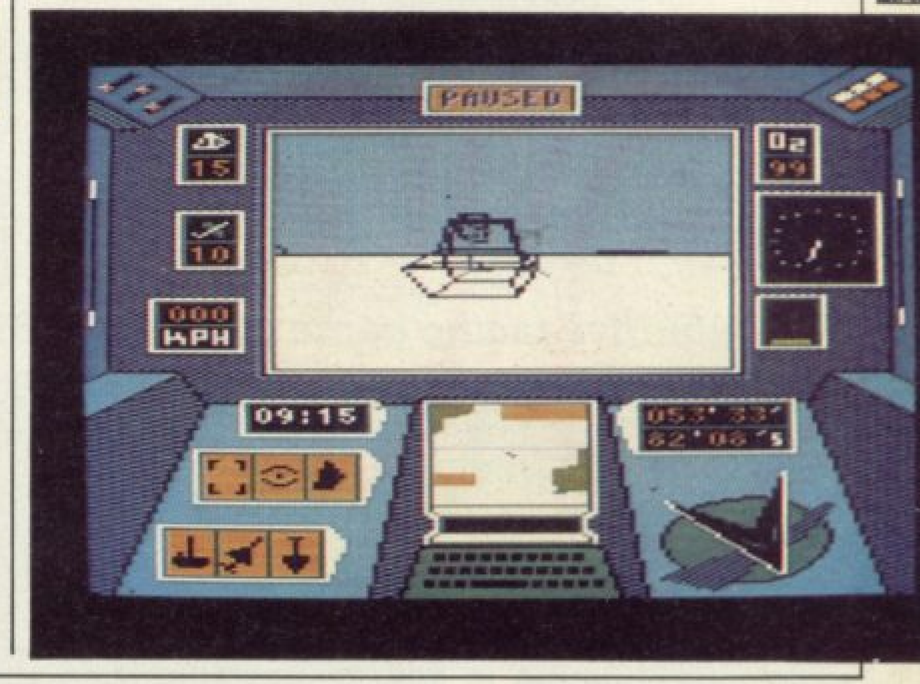
FOLLOWING the Spectrum version of this *Battlezone*-type-game (TGM**009** 46%), comes the CPC offering. An improvement over its Z80 cousin if only in the use of additional colours which give it life and make it more visually pleasing. Apart from this however, the conversion is very similar with effective rather than impressive wireframe graphics moving around the screen at a moderate speed. Tanks remain indistinguishable on the horizon until they draw dangerously near. Sound is adequate with effects occuring infrequently, and there is no title tune.

Arcticfox would be a great game if it included more action. Engagements are limited to attacking the odd passing tank and taking out alien bases – few and far between.

Even with its speed of play, which leaves the Commodore version standing, *Arcticfox* remains limited in addictive qualities and both immediate and long-term appeal.

AMSTRAD CPC: OVERALL 55%

Looking very good but consisting of gameplay as exciting as watching paint dry, Arctic Fox slinks on to the Amstrad.




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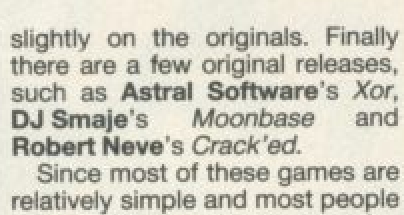
ATARI ST SPECIAL

These ten, mostly budget, ST games by **Atari** have been around for ages, with *Crystal Castle* already having been reviewed in one magazine many months ago. But they've never appeared in the shops and according to Atari it's only now that they're going into UK distribution.

Most of the games are in fact conversions of ancient Atari and **Williams** coin-ops, such as *Missile Command*, *Joust*, *Crystal Castles* and *Moon Patrol*.

Though none of these conversions is likely to astound, they're definitive conversion of once very popular games. Other games, such as *Asteroids Deluxe* and *Battle Zone*, attempt to improve slightly on the originals. Finally there are a few original releases, such as **Astral Software**'s *Xor*, **DJ Smaje**'s *Moonbase* and **Robert Neve**'s *Crack'ed*.

Since most of these games are relatively simple and most people will be familiar with them we've decided to cover them in Version Update form so we can review them all – even *Super Breakout*.



Bear feat

CRYSTAL CASTLES
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

BY comparison with the rest this is a relatively youthful coin-op conversion, and its graphics are among the most impressive of the bunch. The *Pac-Man*-like objective is for Bentley Bear to complete levels by collecting all the pill-like jewels and pearls on each of the Crystal Castles.

Each of the castles is displayed in isometric 3-D perspective, with Bentley and villains shown in outline form whenever they disappear behind a wall. Pursuing Bentley are Crystal Balls, Gem Eaters, Nasty Trees, ghosts, skeletons and the witch Berthilda.

These Gem Guardians are a hungry lot, and besides eating some of the gems themselves they'll also cheerily consume a bear if they catch one.

Bentley Bear gets an extra life at every 70,000 points, however, and there's a magic hat which makes him invulnerable for a short but tuneful time.

Only when he's wearing the hat can Bentley banish the witch Berthilda, but Gem Eaters can be killed whenever they're eating Gems. Bentley can also stun creatures by jumping over them.

A thousand points can be earned if a Pot of Honey is collected, but if it's let alone for too long deadly bees are attracted. This pot shouldn't be confused with Berthilda's steaming cauldron, which turns Bentley into bear stew if he touches it.

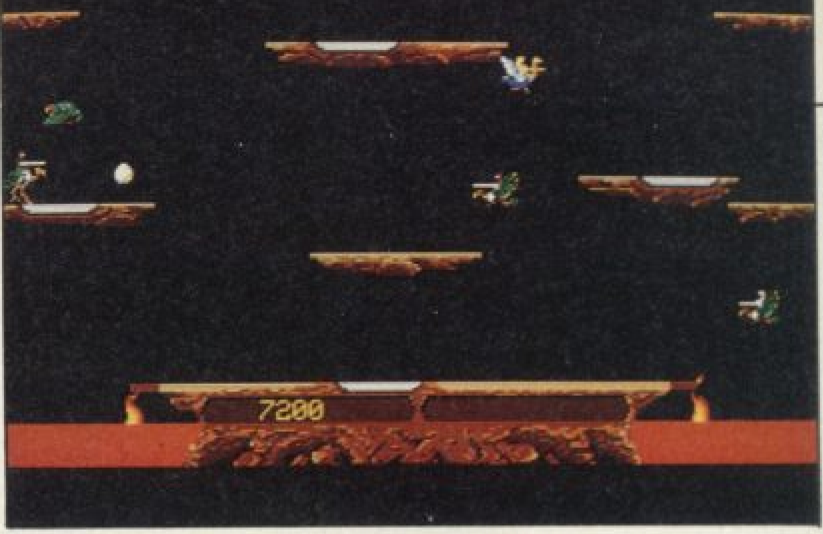
Such dangers occur over ten levels; the first nine have four castles each and up to seven guardians. To help prevent repetition there's also a series of warps from which Bentley can jump to higher levels, as in the original.

Generally, this **Andromeda** conversion is very close to the look of the original arcade game. At first control is a little difficult – diagonals always put joysticks to the test – but there's a mouse option and a good two-player mode as well. Though gameplay is obviously dated now, a lot of work has been put into it making it much more enjoyable than more recent versions of this idea such as *Spidertronic*. Great fun.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 81%

Bentley Bear explores the addictive Crystal Castles





Joust when you though it was safe in the skies . . .

JOUST
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

A CONVERSION of this first appeared on the Spectrum back in 1983 by Softek but was hastily renamed *Ostron*. It's probably fair to say, then, that this is the first authorised *Joust* conversion to appear on a home computer and **Rugby Circle Inc** have made it virtually indistinguishable from the arcade machine.

The bizarre scenario has the player flying an ostrich armed only with a lance, jousting like a knight with wave after wave of Buzzard Riders. Their defeat is ensured by swooping down from above for the lance to strike home.

This isn't as easy as it sounds: inertia and gravity intrude, so you have to keep pressing FIRE to climb.

There are three types of Buzzard Rider of increasing skill. The game begins with you and the Riders appearing on ledges suspended in midair. If a Rider is successfully dismounted, his bird flies off, laying an egg is midair out of frustration.

But unless the egg is quickly picked up, a new and more fearsome opponent is hatched. After a while fast-moving pterodactyls fly across the wraparound screen. You can only kill these by lancing them in the mouth.

Another opponent appears after Level Four when lava has eroded the bottom ledge – fly too low over the lava and the Lava Troll drags you down to a fiery death.

Once all the Riders have been defeated and eggs collected, the next wave begins. In one-player mode there are two additional types of wave: the Egg Wave, where all opponents start as eggs which must be quickly destroyed, and the Pterodactyl Wave, which starts with the prehistoric bird on screen from the start.

In two-player mode, with both on screen simultaneously, there's also a Team Wave (3,000 points each if neither player unseats another) and Gladiator Wave (first player to unseat the other earns 3,000 points).

Points are also awarded, in typical arcade fashion, for almost every successful action and building up a high score can be quite addictive. Highest scores can be saved to disk.

Although *Joust* is a very dated game, the finely-detailed character graphics in this conversion are impressive. Playing alone could become a little repetitive, but the two-player mode is very good indeed and the arcade playability remains intact.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 71%

VERSION UPDATE

BATTLEZONE
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99 Diskette

BATTLEZONE is another Atari blast from the past. It puts you in the hot seat of a future tank, patrolling a barren landscape in classic first-person wire-frame vector graphics.

Cubes and pyramids break up the bare, infinitely-sized world. Enemy tanks, flying saucers, missiles and super-tanks are the enemy, the first tanks being an even match. Soon enough quicker, more agile and faster-firing super-tanks appear. Flying saucers don't fire back but prove a nuisance, distracting you from killing tanks and often getting in the way of your shots. Missiles are the most deadly, heading on a collision course, they zig-zag left and right making targetting difficult, hopping over obstacles as they draw near.

Programmers Andromeda have some minor changes in the conversion from coin-op to ST. Most obvious are those to the tank controls – one joystick is used instead of the arcade's two – and six skill levels have been added. Radar and status displays have been beefed up to look suitably militaristic, the tank now fires round shells rather than square and the tank tracks are visible, turning as the tank moves.

VERSION UPDATE

MOON PATROL

Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

WILLIAMS, authors of the coin-op *Moon Patrol*, have had success with the original *Defender* and *Bezerk*. But among their other less successful machines was this 1982 game now converted for the ST by **Andromeda**.

Moon Patrol takes us far into deepest space to the planet of Sector Nine, home of the dreaded Moonsters and just the place for the Lunar Peace Patrol to exercise the capabilities of the Prowler all-terrain vehicle. Starting off from the home base, the tank travels along horizontally-scrolling landscapes. The craft is fragile, exploding if it falls into a crater, runs into rocks rumbling downhill, or gets hit by the Moonsters' bullets.

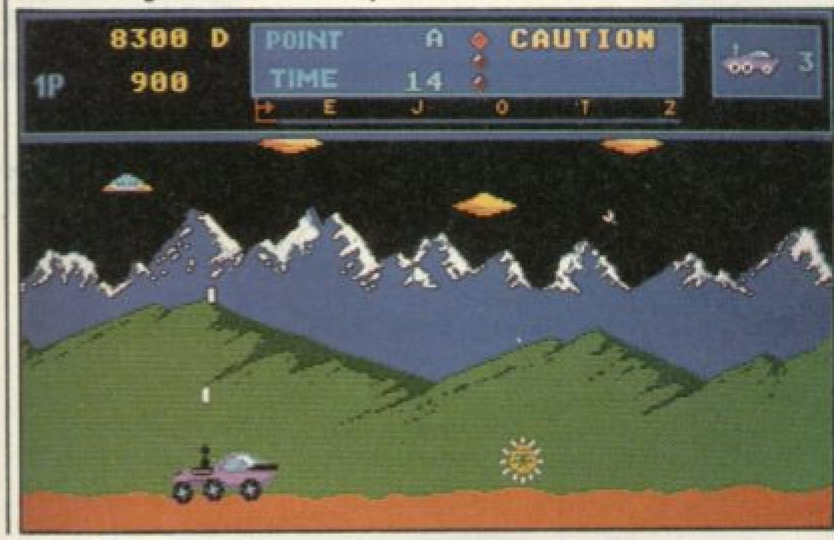
However, the Prowler can leap over craters, use its front laser to destroy oncoming hazards and fire a vertical laser to bring down Moonster spaceships hovering overhead. Later regions see the arrival of missile-firing tanks, suicidal thug cars, landmines, moon plants doing their utmost to snag the Prowler and UFOs which drop missiles creating craters just in front of the craft.

The moon wasteland is split into 26 regions labelled A to Z with five checkpoints along the route. A time bonus is awarded if the Prowler beats the average travel time between checkpoints. Each section has its own particular hazards, progressing in difficulty as the Prowler moves nearer the final marker.

The conversion is faithful to the ancient coin-op and as a result the graphics are poor by today's standards. Sound, too, is predictably limited: simple explosions, laser shots, leaping over obstacles and an undemanding tune What we have, then, is fairly standard arcade fodder of barely average presentation. But, like *Missile Command* it's immediately playable – for a while; it doesn't take long to get through the game and so offers only temporary appeal. Mouse or joystick may be used.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 41%

From the original William's coin-op comes **Moon Patrol**

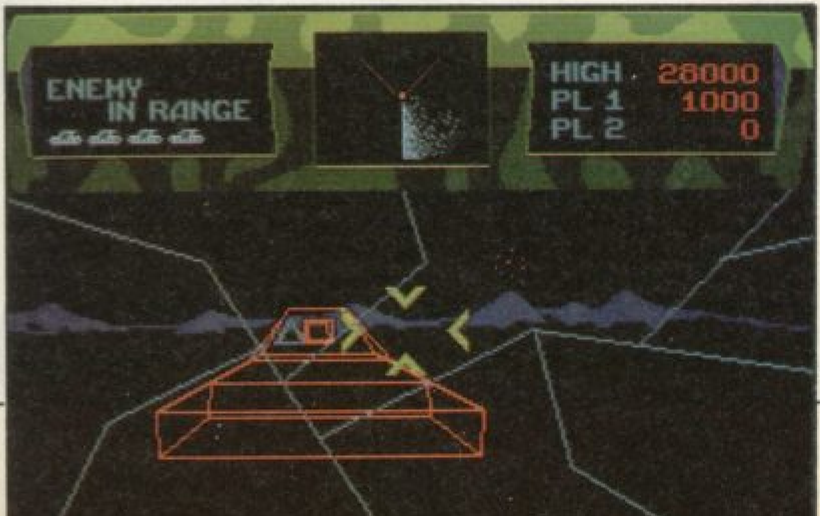


The game's speed is slower than the arcade machine and graphically the vector graphics aren't as smooth in perspective or handling. The loss of speed doubles the difficulty and enemy shells are very difficult to avoid as less time is available to move out of the way.

Battlezone isn't a perfect conversion although there are minor graphical alterations which make it a graphical improvement over the original coin-op, but the game itself is limited.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 51%

Tanks for the memory Atari: **Battle Zone**

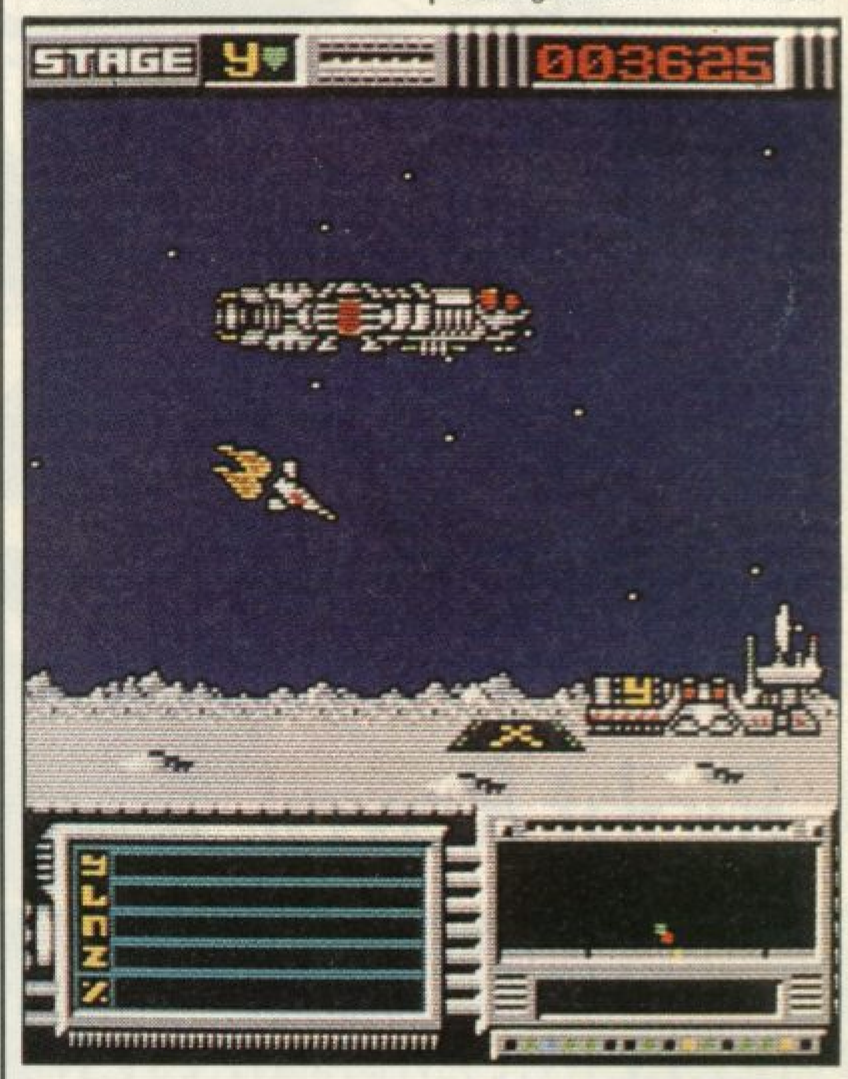


MOONBASE

Atari Corp

Atari ST: £19.95

WIRING in the Earth-Shield supercomputer has overheated, causing its defence devices to attack the earth and moon. The only chance to save the world is to restore the Earth-Shield's superconductor circuits.



Flying over the moon's surface in **Moon Base**

The four metals needed to manufacture superconductors are only found on the moon and must be collected in order. The player controls a small drone rocket which can rotate using retrorockets for forward thrust and is also equipped with a blaster.

Landing on the correct moonbase pad activates the loading of the first metal. The drone must then dock with the orbiting transporter XL11 to unload the metal. A quality gauge shows how good the balance of metals is.

To make life harder, Earth-Shield devices constantly attack the drone. Laser droids fire at the drone and sometimes send it spinning upwards. Six hits are fatal, but an infinite supply of drones is available; only time is limited.

Asteroids litter the skies, and other enemies include the craterpillars – tracked vehicles firing deadly missiles – and the lunarlurkers which emit damaging shockwaves.

Successful unloading of the four metals allows the player to begin the home-run stage. The earth is shown with a marked trajectory for the XL11 to follow. Astromines and cosmic storms litter the course, and when you near the earth retrorockets must be fired to avoid a crash landing.

The third stage involves the docking of the XL11 with four storage vessels to unload the metals. Bonus points are based on the amount and quality of metals. Four identical but progressively harder levels must be completed to save the planet.

The parallax scrolling of the moon's surface is effective, but the screen flicks when the drone is near the edge. The simply-drawn drone rocket is difficult to control, although its movement under gravity is fairly convincing.

With the somewhat awkward control method, progress is very difficult at first. Even when control is mastered, gameplay is frustrating as the drone gets blown up for the umpteenth time, losing its cargo. Most of the action takes place on the first stage – the second and third are very simplistic.

Though in-game sound is limited to atmospheric effects, a snazzy tune accompanies the attractive title screen.

Moonbase isn't that impressive visually but has a fair amount of playability.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 64%

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ATARI ST SPECIAL

XOR
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £19.99

THIS was first an 8-bit release from **Logotron** with simplistic graphics but very tough puzzles. The original programmers, **Astral Software**, did this as their first conversion and since then **Logotron** have become almost exclusively 16-bit.

As in the 8-bit versions there are 15 levels to be completed, each taking the form of a maze which two heroes, represented by shields, explore.

You can only move in four directions, and switch from hero to hero by pressing FIRE. However, there's more than enough to keep the gameplay interesting.

You have a limited number of moves on Level 1 to collect the masks scattered around the maze, always keeping wary of force fields. There are two types of force field, vertical and horizontal, which can only be passed through in the proper direction.

Making your way through the maze, gathering all the masks and getting to the exit within the move limit takes only a go or two to solve. Later levels, however, add other features.

The simplest hazards are falling fish, which will crush a hero if they fall on him. Rather more dangerous opponents are the Spring Chickens, which spring quickly to the left of the screen if, for example, one of your actions causes a fish to move out of the way.

Nabbing a mask and moving upwards to find a Spring Chicken whizzing towards you can become sadly familiar.

Other features are less dangerous – for example, sliding dolls will travel in any direction once pushed until they run into an obstacle.

Pressure bombs explode if they contact fish or chickens, as do the Fizzer Bombs which spring to the left. Both types of bomb are useful for removing obstacles.

As you proceed all these features conspire to produce some very difficult puzzles, although once a little progress has been made it can be very difficult to stop playing.

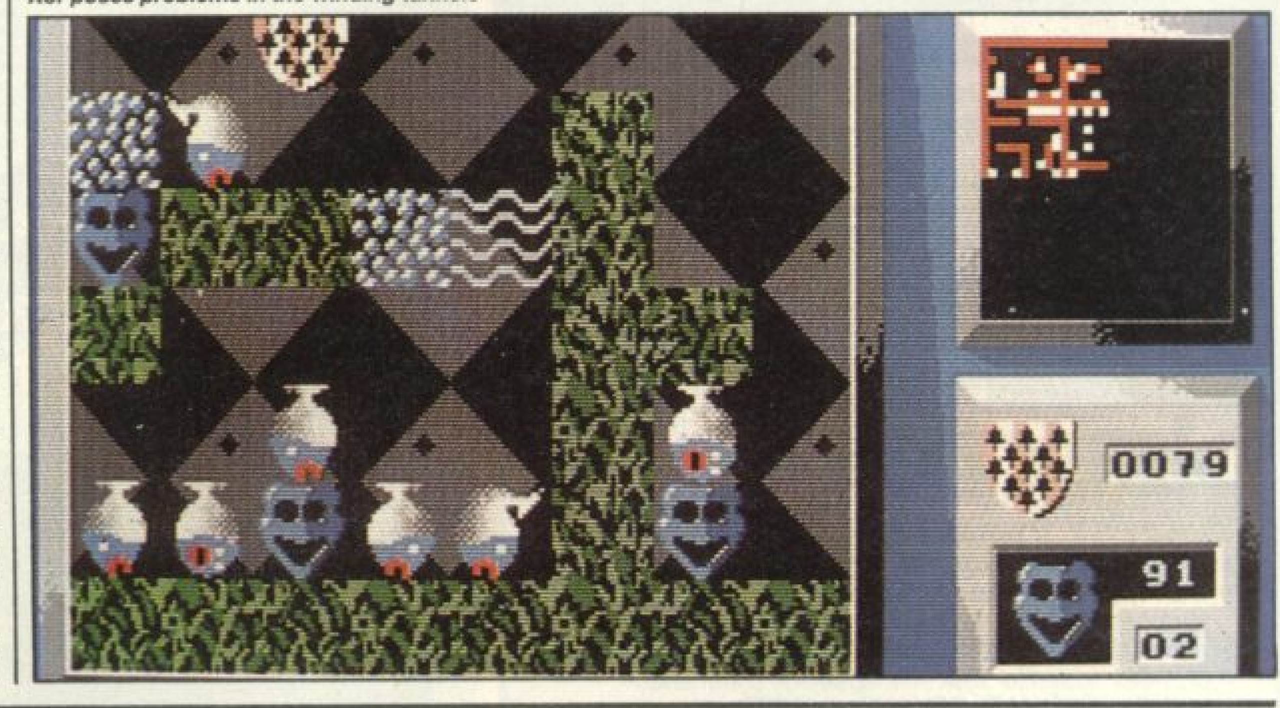
On each level you have one life for each of your two players, but levels can be played in any order you wish – and the last turn replayed as many times as you wish. The latter feature can be particularly useful when you don't have time to find out exactly what killed you. (Fast-forward and rewind features would have been even more useful.)

Graphically *Xor* is very bland indeed and the flickering screen can be a little irritating. An in-game tune can be turned off and sound FX are minimal, without even a beep when you switch between heroes.

Nevertheless, the gameplay is both original and addictive, and much more straightforward than the more recent release *Quadralien*.

While rather pricey for such a straightforward conversion of a blandly-presented 8-bit game, *Xor* on the ST provides a very good puzzle.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 64%



***Xor* poses problems in the winding tunnels**

VERSION UPDATE

MISSILE COMMAND
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

ROB ZDYBEL, author of the classic ST space game *Star Raiders*, has designed and written *Missile Command*, with graphics and animation by **Gary Johnson**. In the arcades, it was one of the first games to use the trackball for control, the rapid response and roll concept of moving the gun sight meant mouse control is the natural form of control for an ST conversion.

You are protecting cities against incoming missiles reentering the atmosphere. As commander of Zardon Missile Defenses, two antiballistic missile (ABM) batteries are on standby, each armed with 15 ABM missiles. Missiles enter the screen from the top, plummeting towards their chosen targets, be it city, the ground itself or one of the two ABM battery sites. Deflection shots are required to explode ABMs ahead of incoming nuclear warheads, destroying them as the blast-wave expands. MIRVs getting too close to the ground, split into more warheads, tripling or even quadrupling your problems.

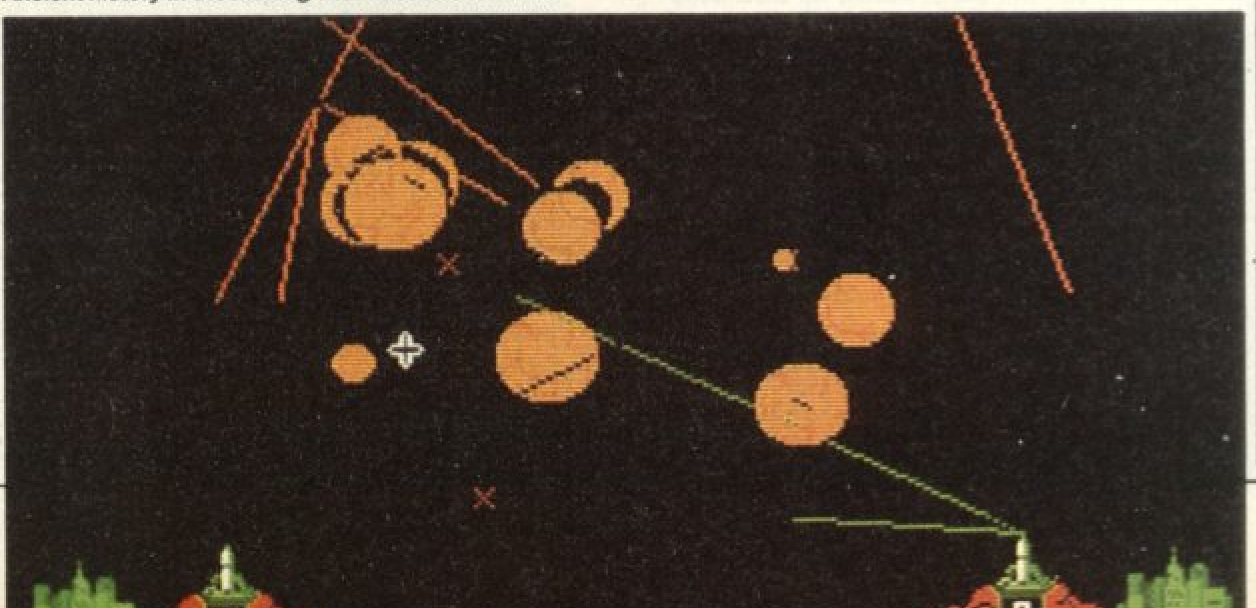
Low-flying fighter planes and satellites roam overhead launching MIRVS. Smart bombs home in on cities, and require direct hits – near-misses merely stall their terminal flight. The overall objective of the game is to ensure that at least one city is still intact – as long as one city is standing, you're still in the game.

Title screen options allow the bonus level at which an extra city is gained to be changed from 5,000 points up to 20,000 or even no cities; the presence of Mirvs and Smart bombs can be switched on or off, or the entire attack in each wave made to consist of only smart bombs; you can skip up to nine waves at a time, though later levels bring in faster missiles, more MIRVS and less time to stop them.

The response and accuracy of the trackball is replicated well through the mouse. The graphics are virtually direct from the coin-op – primitive lines used for the missile trails – and as such it lacks the detail, sound or depth of more modern games. The result, as you may expect, is a simple, but still playable coin-op conversion.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 49%

***Ancient history in the making with* Missile Command**





The chances of successfully navigating an Asteroid field are 3720:1; will you be that one?

VERSION UPDATE

ASTEROIDS DELUXE
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

ANOTHER antique of the computer age, this classic vector graphic game has now been tarted up with solid graphics – which on the whole work well. Your spaceship is armed with a photon cannon, to split and ultimately destroy asteroids, and a limited energy shield which is activated by pulling back on the joystick. Also trying to make it through the asteroid field are small and large alien saucers. Objecting, perhaps, to the wanton destruction of another natural beauty spot they come on the wraparound with all lasers firing. A less aggressive foe is the alien drone ship, a cluster of blue drone ships which only attack if fired upon. Unfortunately to clear a screen you have to dispose of them too – and they're mean. A bonus ship is awarded at every 10,000 points, but they don't come easy in this generally tough translation.

In terms of graphics the Deluxe version is certainly an improvement, but still quite poor while sound is just adequate. The underlying gameplay is incontrovertibly *Asteroids*, but with such minimal improvements that it soon becomes repetitive. An authentic graphic conversion would probably have been better if the programmers couldn't be bothered to add more to the gameplay.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 34%

CRACK'ED
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £14.99

THIS is is an original creation by one **Richard Neve** of the 'they don't make games like this any more' school. The scenario casts you as a bird-watching scientist who is excited to find some rare South American hornbills nesting in the 'old yolk tree'.

But when the hornbills fly off to grab some food, eggnappers appear on the scene. Taking hold of your rifle, you set about defending the precious birds.

There are two game stages. In the first, eggs are scattered across the screen in several nests which must be defended against the eggnappers with the cross-sight of you rifle. Pressing the left mouse button fires the gun, pressing the right button allows you to catch the egg and return it to a nest. If you survive the time limit it's on to the next screen.

The second stage takes place when you're transferring the hornbills' offspring to the next nesting place. Chickens appear through 17 holes in a henhouse and pelt you with a hail of eggs.

Picking up ten eggs you try to return fire. As each chicken appears, you have a few seconds to move the horizontal and vertical cursors into place and fire.

This isn't easy. If the egg hits the rooster, bonus points are awarded and another egg is picked up. But if you miss, points are lost and when you've no eggs left it's on to the next roosting site.

There are five different sites ranging from the 'old yolk tree' to a haunted house to the moon. All the sites have their own particular creatures with individual, humorous death sequences.

There are three skill levels to *Crack'ed* and on the easiest it's fairly simple to keep going through the repetitious and shallow gameplay. Still, this is a well-executed game, possibly one for the younger player.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 44%

Travel underwater for fish eggs in Crack'ed



SUPER BREAKOUT
Atari Corp

Atari ST: £9.99

THE world's first computer game is widely believed to be Atari's *Pong*, but *Breakout* can't be far behind. And recent titles such as *Arkanoid* have revamped the *Breakout* style, making the genre semirespectable again.

But the **Paradox** conversion of *Super Breakout* strives, bravely if not perversely, to recreate the basic crudity of such prehistoric games.

The basic idea is, of course, to knock out all the bricks with bat and ball. *Super Breakout*'s improvements to the formula are few.

First, the speed of the ball changes according to which of the four different coloured types of bricks is hit.

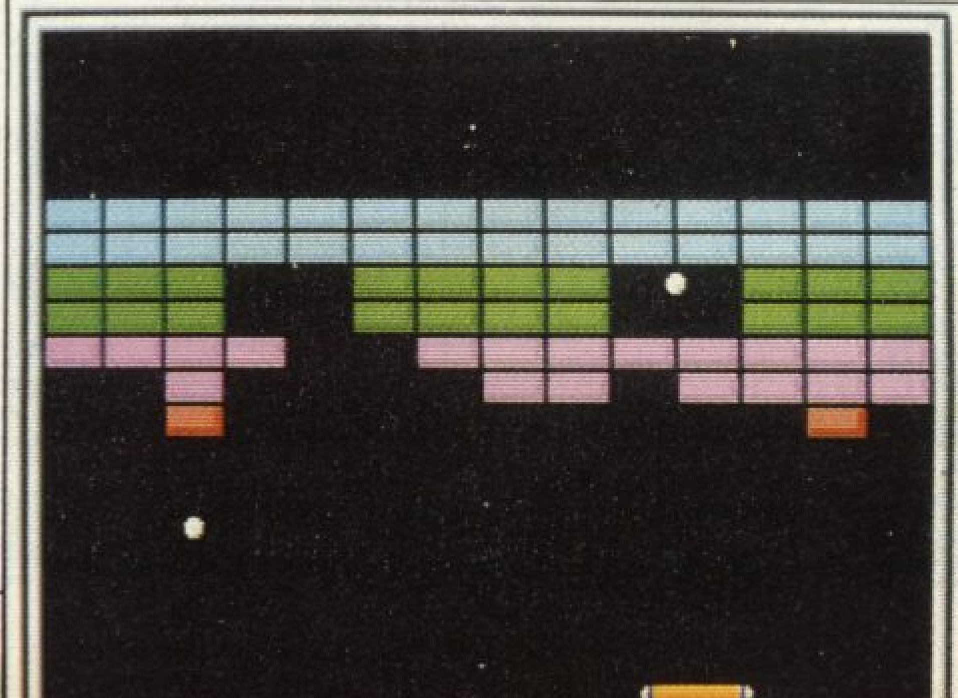
Second, once the ball hits the top of the screen, the bats shrink to half size.

To these basic improvements are added three extra styles of play: Double (two balls and two bats, one above the other), Cavity (two bats and two additional balls trapped in cavities in the brick wall) and Progressive (after a while the wall begins to descend, but disappears before it reaches the bottom of the screen).

More fundamental improvements, such as having the bricks form interesting shapes, are missed out – possibly due to a desire for accuracy in the conversion. Up to eight people can play if they're really desperate, but overall this isn't recommended.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 24%

Going back to our roots, Super Breakout







DRUG WARS

LA CRACKDOWN

Epyx

Throughout Los Angeles, the evil drug traffickers are plying their wares. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) suspect an import/export firm, Pacific Shipping, of drug smuggling. The company import clone computers from the Far East, but their profits are unusually high.

The LAPD have recommended that a surveillance team consisting of an unknown rookie and a senior case officer be assigned to penetrate and investigate the Pacific Shipping operation. The player takes the role of the senior officer who directs the rookie's actions via a two-way radio earpiece. At the start of the game, the player can choose from four rookies, each with different attributes and character.

A number of menus are used to access commands; one of the most used is the GO TO order, which brings up a submenu of places the rookie can reach in his van. Initially, his only destinations are the Pacific Shipping warehouse and police HQ. New locations are discovered by following cars as they leave buildings.

When inside a building, the bottom-left corner of the screen shows a plan of that building with all its rooms and connecting doors. The rest of the screen gives a good graphic representation of the rookie in the current room.

The rookie can search rooms for clues – if one is found, it can be photographed for future reference.

One of the most important aspects of the game is the bugging of rooms. The rookie carries four bugs which can be planted in any room to record conversations between drug dealers.

If the rookie encounters another character in a room, he automatically stops for a conversation. This can be continued using the COMMUNICATE command. A rundown and mugshot of each character can be displayed via the IDENTIFY option.

The detailed instruction booklet that comes with the game also contains the criminal records of some of the suspects.

The player can order the rookie to arrest a character, but if there is insufficient evidence the rookie will quit, ending the game. He may also resign if he is given stupid orders such as bugging a room when there's someone in it. On restarting the game, the player is given the option of keeping information gained during the previous attempt.

GO TO
COMMUNICATE
SEARCH
BUG
SNAP PICTURE
TIME COMPRESS
ARREST
REVIEW
IDENTIFY
QUIT
1 2 3
4 5 6
WAREHOUSE

It's tough on the streets in LA Crackdown

IBM PC
Diskette: £19.99

Only CGA four-colour mode is catered for and the usual mixture of bright pink and blue gives a strangely bright atmosphere to a dark scenario. The choice of rookie helps to give variation, but during play the options are initially very restricted, although this improves as new locations are discovered. The plan of the current building is useful, but the actual options inside a room are very limited; mainly they involve just searching or planting a bug. Character interaction is limited to automatic conversations, and there is no facility to ask specific questions. This sums up the general feel of LA Crackdown **– the player has too little control over the rookie's actions.**

OVERALL 68%

On patrol in LA



Name : Gerald DeMoto
Birthdate: 3/12/1964
Education: Fielding High School,1985
Pogo Junior College,A.A.,1987
Height: 6'1" Weight: 203 Lbs
Hair : black Eyes : brown
Small scar on left elbow.
Gerald graduated 46th out of his class of 63. However, he qualified highest marksman in all weapons.
His knowledge of legal procedure is weak.
Press ← or → to choose, RETURN when done

OTHER FORMATS

No other versions are planned.

"The player has too little control over the rookie's actions"

PRESS ANY KEY

VERSION UPDATE

THE BARD'S TALE

Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts
Spectrum: Cassette £8.95, Diskette £14.95
Amstrad: Cassette £8.95, Diskette £14.95
Commodore 64/128: Cassette £9.95

ELECTRONIC ARTS certainly believe in their products, particularly in the case of *The Bard's Tale*, now into its third volume on the Commodore 64 (reviewed in this issue). The conversions now continue with not only versions for the Spectrum and Amstrad CPC but also the release on Commodore 64 cassette.

The Bard's Tale is a fantasy role playing game in which the computer-controlled party of fantasy characters are on a quest to defeat the evil Mangar, holding his demonic sway over the city of Skara Brae. The characters start off with next to no experience and knowledge and need to build up experience and advance to higher levels through killing monsters, collecting gold and buying ever-more-powerful weapons. The party can be made up of any of seven different races, with ten character classes to choose from including the standard RPG classes of warrior, thief, paladin and magician. Spell-casting characters have up to seven levels of spells available but only through experience can the later level spells be cast.

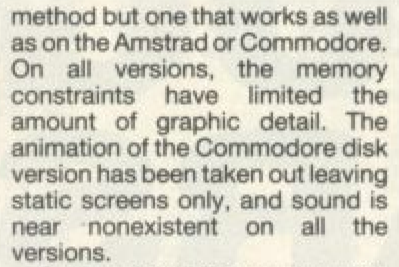
The city of Skara Brae has dungeons to explore, inns to frequent, houses to explore and tasks to perform while building up the characters ready for the conflict with the evil mage Mangar.

On the CPC, *The Bard's Tale* certainly has its moments. The window containing the graphic of each creature, building and the Skara Brae streets are graphically pleasant although colour is used in moderation and it hasn't gone into excess in detail. On the Spectrum, encounters with creatures are displayed in the window in various shades of blue, a not particularly adventurous method but one that works as well as on the Amstrad or Commodore. On all versions, the memory constraints have limited the amount of graphic detail. The animation of the Commodore disk version has been taken out leaving static screens only, and sound is near nonexistent on all the versions.

On the original Commodore disk version, encounters were heralded by disk access, but, remarkably, this doesn't happen with the tape as encounters occur immediately. Unfortunately, a lot of the encounters use the same graphic so it can get rather tiring fighting the same creature three times in a row. The good news, though, is that even with the removal of the potentially disastrous tape access from the main core of the program, the game has kept its playability and it is easy to get into and still retains a certain amount of depth.



The Japanese walk funny but a Samurai Warrior with a mysterious gate? – Amstrad screen



More gold than you can shake a spear at – Spectrum screen

The Bard's Tale is the same across all formats, with little difference between them in play or presentation. The Spectrum version copes well with the loss of certain colours but on all formats it's very easy to get lost, as the streets look identical and the map supplied with the game isn't the most helpful of guides.

When *The Bard's Tale* first came out on the Commodore, it was monumental in generating the atmosphere and depth of a true fantasy role playing game. Time has moved on though and the game now looks rather simple with the main player involvement centred around wandering through the many streets of Skara Brae (nearly all of which look identical) killing the monsters that are unfortunate enough to get in the party's way and collecting the treasures. The dungeons do hold further tasks and ever deadlier opponents, but the game boils down to the traditional but shallow idea of hack-and-slay. Although this is the basis for most computerised fantasy roleplaying games, a little more depth would have gone a long way with *The Bard's Tale*.

SPECTRUM 48/128: OVERALL 74%
AMSTRAD CPC: OVERALL 72%
COMMODORE 64/128: OVERALL 73%

VERSION UPDATE

Mouse in the house

MICKEY MOUSE

Gremlin Graphics

Atari ST: £19.95
Commodore 64/128 Cassette: £9.99, Diskette: £14.99
Amstrad CPC Cassete: £9.99, Diskette: £14.99

WITH the full review of Gremlin's second Disney licence appearing in TGM**009** (Spectrum 87%), Mickey now materialises on the Atari ST, Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64/128.

All conversions have the same gameplay and plot as on the Spectrum. A mere babe-in-arms at 60 years old, Mickey has been called to defeat the Ogre King who threatens to take over the magic kingdom. The only way to break the big O's plan is to climb to the top of the four towers of Disney Castle and retreive four segments of the magic wand, currently in the possession of four witches.

Controlling Mickey, you tackle one tower at a time. Each is split into many levels. The screen, showing a cross section of the tower, scrolls vertically as Mickey wanders around blasting the Ogre's minions with either his water pistol or hammer.

Destroying minions results in Mickey being awarded a magic potion or a key. Keys open doors into one of the four subgames, which are simple but entertaining enough. The objective is to barricade all the doors from where the minions appear by completing the subgames. Having completed all four towers the heroic rodent meets the Ogre King face to whiskers with only his water pistol for defence.

First, the bad news – the Commodore 64/128 conversion is graphically very poor and has none of the beautiful colours or detail of other versions. Losing the graphics means losing the best part of the game because although it plays quite well, it fails to provide addictive qualities leaving Mickey looking shoddy.

However, for ST owners *Mickey Mouse* is a treat with excellently drawn characters capturing the Disney feel down to the ground. This kind of attention to detail provides a pulling point to get further into the game and generally makes it very enjoyable. The Amstrad CPC game is very similar to the ST version, apart from the obviously more blocky graphics. Gameplay is a touch easier than on other versions making the game initially more playable. Colour has been used well, though playing *Mickey Mouse* on a green screen monitor, the graphics may lose some definition.

Music on all three is taken from *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and, while being a reasonable rendition, becomes irritating after a short while. Fortunately, it can be turned off.



Mickey Mouse *climbs the ladder of success – Amstrad screen*

ATARI ST: OVERALL 89%
COMMODORE 64/128: OVERALL 65%
AMSTRAD CPC: OVERALL 85%

MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE IN A DARK FUTURE

OVERLANDER
Elite Systems

Once again the grey area of copyright is fought over with **US Gold** and **Elite** clashing over the similarities between *Overlander* and *Roadblasters*. Elite have won this round as *Overlander* was first conceived fourteen months ago but by pure chance the games are both coming out at about the same time. *Overlander* was written by **Richard Underhill**.

Following the collapse of the ozone layer in the year 2025, the twenty-first century survivors sought refuge from the destructive forces of outer space radiation by building underground cities across the country. The lifeline to these cities are the freeways, a network of surface roads which have somehow survived the radiation and now provide the only form of travel and transportation of goods between cities.

Between each city lie the surface-dwellers, gangs of outcasts out to stop anyone driving from city to city. Only the Overlanders, the mercenaries of the road intent on carrying goods between the cities, are brave enough to face the risks on the freeways.

At the start of each run in the city, the Overlander is given the chance to transport merchandise for the good guys, the Federation or the Crimelords (the bad guys). Taking illegal goods is ultimately more rewarding but the risks are greater, while carrying Federation is a little safer but not so beneficial financially. Whatever choice is made fifty percent of the money for the mission is given upfront.

DRIVING LIKE A MANIAC

The mission money is used to buy fuel, armour and weapons for the journey ahead. Enough fuel must be purchased if the car is to get through to the next city and with no garages en route, running out of gas is fatal. Weapons to buy include cheap and cheerful flame bombs, up market homing missiles and top-of-the-range smart bombs which, at five grand a piece are expensive but worth it. Armour plating, bullet-proofing, battering rams and wheelblades give the car added protection against the hazards of the road and vary in price and effectiveness. The engine can be boosted to give turbo speed. Adding a lean conversion engine provides economic fuel usage and superbrakes can bring the car to a literal dead halt almost instantly. As well as armour, weapons and engine add-ons, an extra life can be bought for the modest sum of $5000.

Any fitted extras are represented on screen together with the current number remaining of that particular extra. Where applicable, up to nine of a type can be installed on the car, with only armour plating, wheelblades, the in-built rapid fire gun and engine refinements being permanent car fixtures, the majority of weapons and armour being used up all too quickly. Unfortunately, in play the weapons are suspect in operation, homing missiles rarely home-in, flame bombs nearly always overshoot their targets leaving only the built-in rapid fire gun and the smart bombs to do the job of destruction.

Once out on the road, it's back to the familiar third person car racing style of game as the Overlander burns through each of the five. The surface dwellers aren't only on foot as they too have vehicles to hand. Beaten up limos roam along the freeway bumping and pushing until the player is shot or rammed off the road. Suicidal motorcyclists carrying explosives try to 'pull the ton' and take out any Overlanders in the process

The biggest enemies, the Off-Roaders in their large four-wheel drive trucks appear in groups of three rumbling along, the man on the back firing bazookas shells, lobbing petrol bombs and firing anti-aircraft and elephant guns. Stubborn opponents can be destroyed by using a purchased weapon, activated by pulling back on the joystick and pressing the fire button. This method would have worked if it wasn't so easy to accidentally launch a special weapon Pressing a key to fire the weapon might have been better in this case.

Among the stationary hazards are over turned cars, shotgun wielding maniacs rapidly firing at cars roaring down the long stretches and crash barriers in the road. Purchased armour is automatically put into operation but once used up through collisions the car becomes once more all too vunerable.

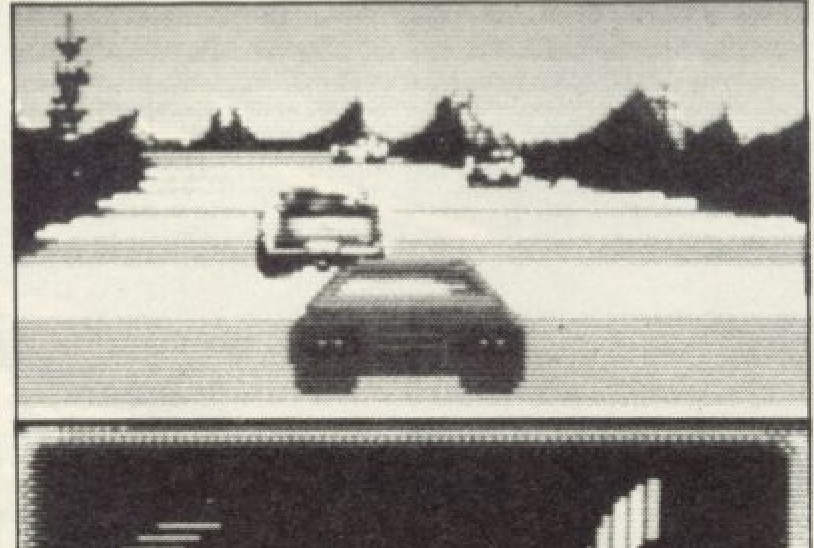
Make it through to the next city and the rest of the reward money together with any dollars earned by destroying the surface dwellers can be used to buy extras for the car.

Once tooled up it's onto the next freeway with yet more twists, turns, hills and hazards to overcome in the bid to become a true Overlander.

While limited to fast racing and destructive shoot-'em-up play *Overlander* certainly combines the two effectively. The ability to buy extra equipment adds depth and strategic thought to the game while retaining the constant action element, something which *Fire and Forget* and *Roadblasters* fall down on. This said, *Overlander* is unfortunately rather easy, the basic tactics learnt in getting through one route can be almost directly applied to subsequent routes as they offer little more than slight variations in layout and graphic presentation.

Overlander is a very good game of its type, the best so far in all-round presentation and speed ,through it suffers slightly for being too easy.

Rev it up with the ST version of Overlander



ATARI ST
Diskette: £19.99

The fast scrolling with the smooth flowing hills, bends and roads makes *Overlander* immediately attractive. With the race-and-destroy theme there is greater emphasis on the graphic, sonic and general presentation of the game and as such *Overlander* works well. The graphics have a moderately high degree of definition, using colour extensively although there is little more than token animation. The car itself is neatly defined, lacking colour but capable of precise and swift movement when required. The dashboard is also well done with excellent subtle brown shades, relying on the on-board weapons and rev/speed counters to add colour. Why though is there no sensation of tyre movement or burning rubber when starting off?

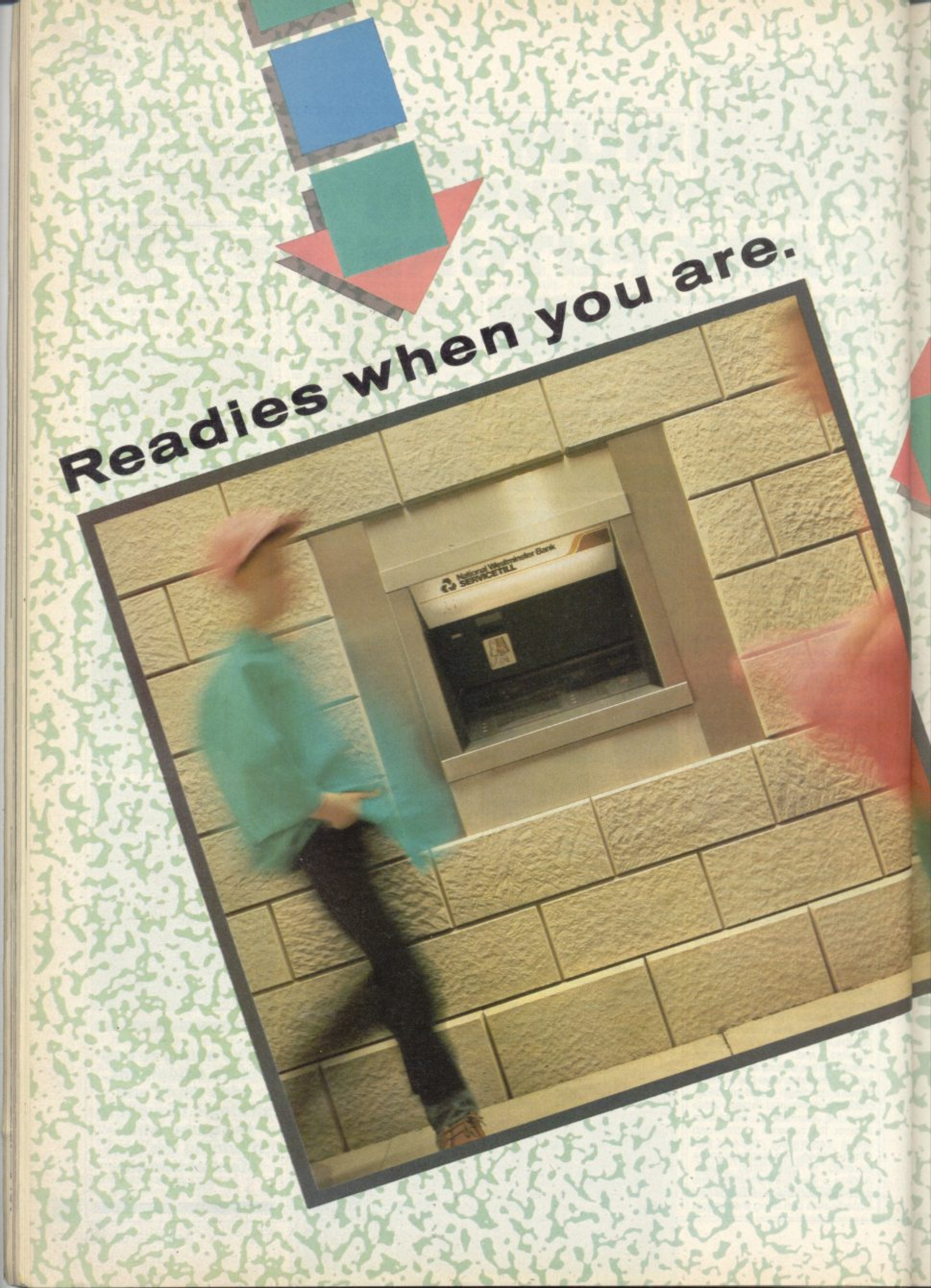
OVERALL 82%

OTHER VERSIONS

Expect to see *Overlander* on the Amiga (£24.99), Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and diskette (£14.99), Commodore cassette (£9.99) and diskette (£11.99) as well as on Spectrum cassette and diskette priced at £7.99 and £12.99 respectively. The Spectrum *Overlander* is looking good, inevitably monochrome in appearance but using some nicely detailed roadside graphics and vehicles.

"The ability to buy extra equipment adds depth and strategic thought to the game while retaining the constant action element"

PRESS ANY KEY


Readies when you are.

VERSION UPDATE

THE BARD'S TALE II - THE DESTINY KNIGHT

Electronic Arts

Amiga: £24.95

WHILE part two of *The Bard's Tale* series has not been reviewed in TGM, the age of the original Commodore 64/128 warrants it a version update.

The land of the Realm in which *The Bard's Tale* series is set has been protected by the power of the Destiny Wand. Unfortunately, as its strength wanes and anarchy and chaos sweep over Realm, mercenaries enter the capital city and steal the Wand. The evil Arch-Mage Lagoth Zanta breaks the wand into seven shards and scatters them throughout the wilderness. Each piece is placed in a lethal dungeon puzzle-room known as the Snare of Death. The adventurer's task is three-fold, to defeat Lagoth Zanta, locate all seven parts to the Wand and reforge them to return peace to the Realm.

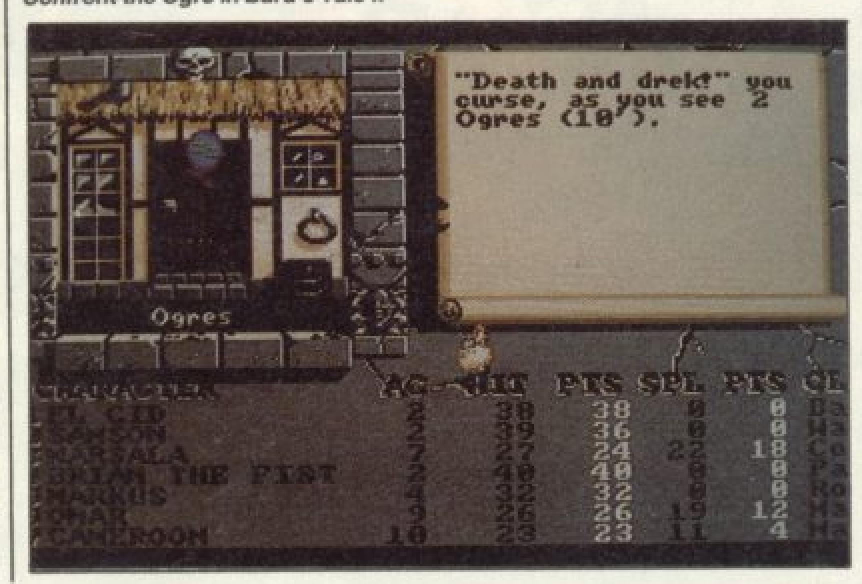
TBT II features twice the playing area as the first game, it has 25 dungeons, over 100 monsters, new spells to cast, six cities and castles to get lost in, special encounters and a massive wilderness to explore.

Amiga play is in the standard *Bard's Tale* mould using the familiar classical elements of computer moderated roleplaying games. *TBT I* placed considerable emphasis on the hack-and-slay traditional RPG methods of play while *TBT II* advances gameplay a stage further with the introduction of the puzzle-rooms within the dungeons – a deadly combination testing the player's intelligence and the strength of his adventurers. The heart of the game is similar to that of the Commodore 64/128, the only significant improvements being the graphics and presentation. Encounters, buildings and objects are displayed in the graphics window and have detail, are well designed, use colour superbly and feature neat animation. Sonic accompaniment is restricted to a pleasant title screen tune with no effects at all, this is surprising as the Amiga's sound chip could have been put to excellent use in generating an incredible atmosphere.

Control through the mouse is superior to the oversensitive cursor keys and works fine as the streets and wilderness rapidly scroll past. While the heart of the game remains disappointingly unchanged and the disk access during encounters is still present, there are little extras which add much to the game: the scroll which actually scrolls when messages are displayed, the graphic animation and the flame which appears when torches are lit, all make the Amiga conversion of *The Bard's Tale II, The Destiny Knight* a very entertaining game to play.

AMIGA: OVERALL 76%

Confront the Ogre in **Bard's Tale II**



VERSION UPDATE

Where hegor, I gor

BARBARIAN

Psygnosis/Melbourne House

Spectrum 48/128: £9.99

ORIGINALLY released for the 16-bit market (reviewed in TGM **002** – Atari ST 80%, Amiga 87%), Melbourne House has teamed up with Psygnosis to convert the successful title, *Barbarian* to the less powerful machines.

Hegor The Barbarian was taught how to fight by his father, Thoron. Womanising, dragon slaying and general barbaric behaviour earned them both many enemies. One in particular, an evil master of magic called Necron, hated Thoron and sent his dragon ally, Vulcuran to kill him – which, after a ferocious battle, he did. Hegor swore revenge and dared enter Necron's underground kingdom in the hope of slaying both Vulcuran and the nefarious magician.

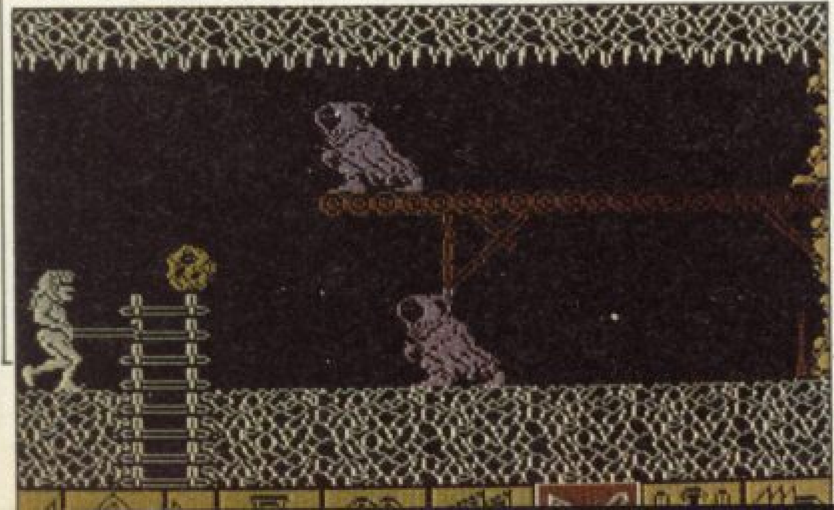
This is where you come in, beginning your quest at the opening to the subterranean complex, you control the monochromatic Hegor as he walks, runs, fights, and jumps his way through the caverns. Many enemies and man-traps lurk in the complex, all nicely animated and deadly to the touch.

Control of Hegor, whether by keys or joystick, is via a row of icons along the base of the playing area. The chosen action is highlighted in red and executed by pressing the fire button or appropriate key.

Sound is minimal throughout, but this does not detract from gameplay which is surprisingly similar to the 16-bit versions. All in all, an excellent conversion.

MACHINE:SPECTRUM 48/128
OVERALL 81%

Hagar faces the ghostly inhabitants of the subterranean complex



VERSION UPDATE

WORLD DARTS

Mastertronic

Atari ST: £9.95

AFTER last month's straightforward conversion of this Spectrum-derived, Amiga-based arcade game, comes **Binary Design**'s ST version. The essential game structure remains the same. Playing either against another player or one of eight computerised opponents, you must try and score 501 with as few throws as possible.

The darts board is divided into 20 basic segments, with small double and treble score subsegments. On your throw a hand moves across the screen in deliberately sluggish and erratic response to joystick control. Guiding the hand into the right area and releasing the dart at just the right moment are the keys to the game. After your three throws, player two takes centre stage – represented by a side-on graphic of a darts tournament if the computer is playing.

The ST's graphics are occasionally disappointing – in the side-on tournament, the player's jumper can be exactly the same colour as the carpet. The dart board, although more perfectly circular than on the Amiga, lacks the subtle shading. Sampled sound effects, such as the announcer's northern accent, are up to Amiga standard. Unfortunately there are no skill levels, but although gameplay remains ultimately repetitive, the lack of disk access on the ST makes it more enjoyable to play.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 57%

Get on the oche for **World Darts**



HEY, FATSO!

CHUBBY GRISTLE
GrandSlam

Authors of *Chubby Gristle*, the **Teque Software Development** team, say the character of Chubby is based on the multi-storey car park attendant near their offices. **Teque**, whose members previously worked for **Gremlin Graphics**, also wrote the *Monty Mole* series from which Chubby is derived.

Chubby Gristle is the fattest person alive. Although grossly overweight he just can't stop eating. Controlling Chubby, your task is to eat through 20 screens of food in a bid to reach the one ton mark on the scales. Screens are all in the traditional platform game form, featuring animated enemies destined to make life difficult for Chubby, and lifts and escalators to help him reach high places. For a portly sized person, Chubby has a surprisingly energetic jump, allowing him to leap onto conveniently placed objects such as dustbins and barrels.

You can't park there

Themes such as shopping in Sainsbellys, or a drinking session at the Pose And Frown all make desperate attempts to generate a few chuckles – which is the main stumbling block of the whole game. The possibilities to make the game amusing have been missed or, at least, not carried out to their full potential, leaving the frustrating feeling that *Chubby Gristle* is just too silly to be funny.

Each screen needs to be perfected before you can attempt the next, which is not an easy (or enjoyable) task with the three lives provided.

It is strange that such an ambitious software house as GrandSlam have taken a step back to the platform game genre. If Teque had added something new to the theme *Chubby Gristle* may have been more addictive. One knows what to expect because it has all been done so many times before – and by the same programming team. *Chubby Gristle* is far too simplistic and annoying to make any impact on the Atari ST.

ATARI ST £19.95

Graphics, although bright and jolly, are reminiscent of a colourful Spectrum program and gameplay fails to impress – especially as only 20 screens are available. A bouncy theme tune plays throughout but quickly becomes annoying. Chubby **may find more appeal on the 8-bit formats – for a 16-bit game, Chubby falls short.**

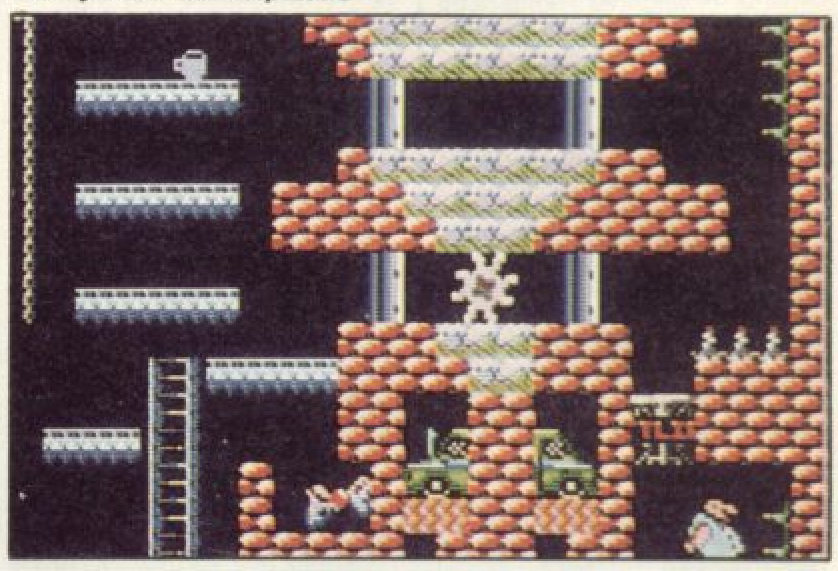
OVERALL 24%

OTHER VERSIONS

Chubby Gristle**is planned for release on the Amiga, Spectrum 48/128, Amstrad CPC, Commodore 64/128 and MSX.**

"For a 16-bit game, Chubby **falls short"**

Chubby Gristle eats trespassers



VERSION UPDATE

Another brick in the wall

ARKANOID 2: REVENGE OF DOH

Ocean

Atari ST: £19.95

REVENGE OF DOH (reviewed in TGM**005** on the Spectrum 48/128, 81% and TGM**006** on the Amstrad CPC, 78%) makes one wonder if there is a limit to the parameters of the *Breakout*-clone genre, if so, this game might be thought of as coming dangerously close. After all, what does the sequel possibly have over its predecessor?

Revenge Of Doh is a pleasure to play; mouse control is very responsive although it would have been nice to have had a joystick option as well. The graphics are a colourful treat and quite mesmeric to look at as you attempt to keep your ball in play. As would be expected of the ST, speed is not sacrificed and the velocity of the ball varies nicely between an almost gentle bouncing off the bricks to completely manic action when things heat up.

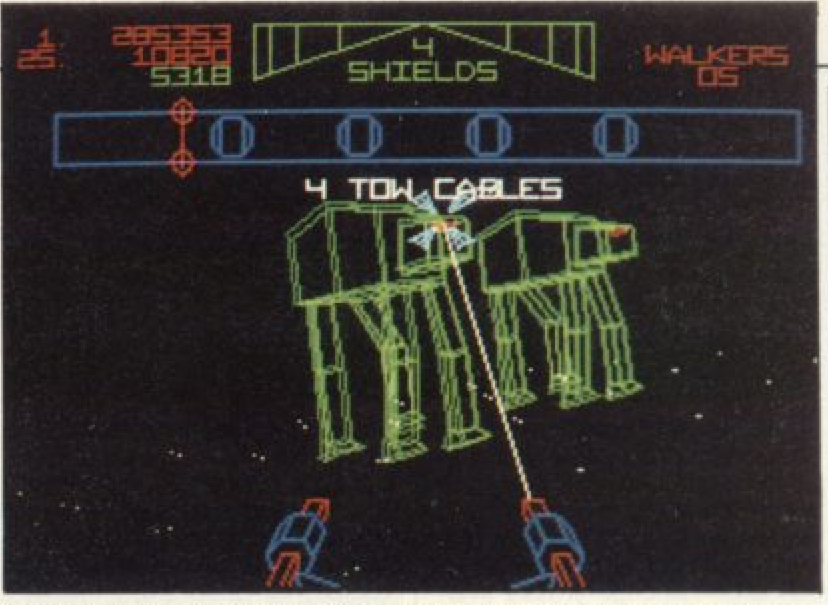
Apparently simplistic and repetitive gameplay masks all manner of devious developments such as balls which split into three, bats which turn into bullet-firing guns, and balls which travel through any brick in their way. The insidious alien sprites familiar in the original *Arkanoid* hover at the top of the screen in a similar way until the walls are broken and they can float about the screen confusing the action and deflecting balls when hit.

Sound is limited to the conventional high-pitched pings, but the vividly coloured graphics more than make up for this deficit. With *Breakout*, *Arkanoid* and *Impact* on the market it is difficult to keep the blood in this genre fresh, but *Revenge Of Doh* manages admirably. It might leave some cold, but for most players it is difficult to resist having 'just one more go'.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 85%



Revenge Of Doh . . . *it's a dear*



Tackle AT-ATs with your remaining four tow cables in **The Empire Strikes Back**

VERSION UPDATE

Mint crisps

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Domark

Atari ST: £19.95

FORMING the second part of Domark's *Star Wars* trilogy, *The Empire Strikes Back* was first reviewed in TGM**009** on the Spectrum (87%). The Atari ST version, like the Spectrum game, has been programmed by **Vector Grafix** and features fast, effective vector graphics which match the speed and animation of the coin-op.

The game consists of four parts and begins on the frozen wastes of Hoth as Luke Skywalker skims across the surface shooting Imperial probots. The second takes Luke into combat with the AT-ATs and the smaller AT-STs – tow cables are used to bring the machines to their knees and eventual destruction. Thirdly, you take the part of Han Solo as he battles with fireball-pumping TIE fighters. Shoot the fireballs and TIE fighters to access the fourth and final part which has you controlling 'the fastest heap of junk in the galaxy' through a deadly asteroid field. There are three levels of play, selected at the start of the game.

The Empire Strikes Back is a superb conversion, greatly improved over *Star Wars*, this is the arcade game down to the last detail. The graphics are animated extremely well, and move at a rapid speed. Sonics are provided by a good rendition of the film sound track – including speech – complementing the explosive effects well. Though the game itself is an old one, the ST conversion is great and remains highly addictive.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 89%

SOLDIER BLUES

NINETEEN PART 1: BOOT CAMP

Cascade

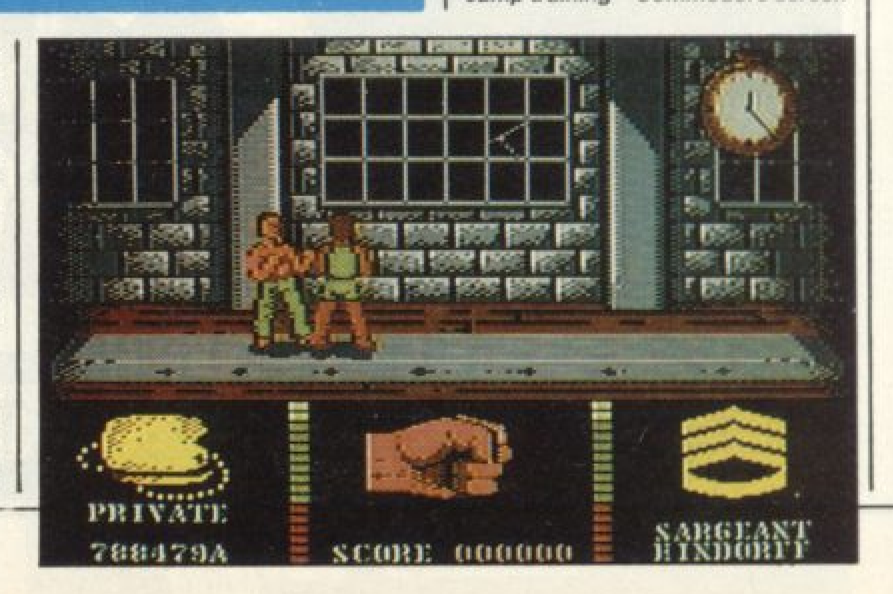
Inspired by the Paul Hardcastle song of the same name *Nineteen* has been designed by John Lewis and Sean Conran. Rob Hubbard recreated the music.

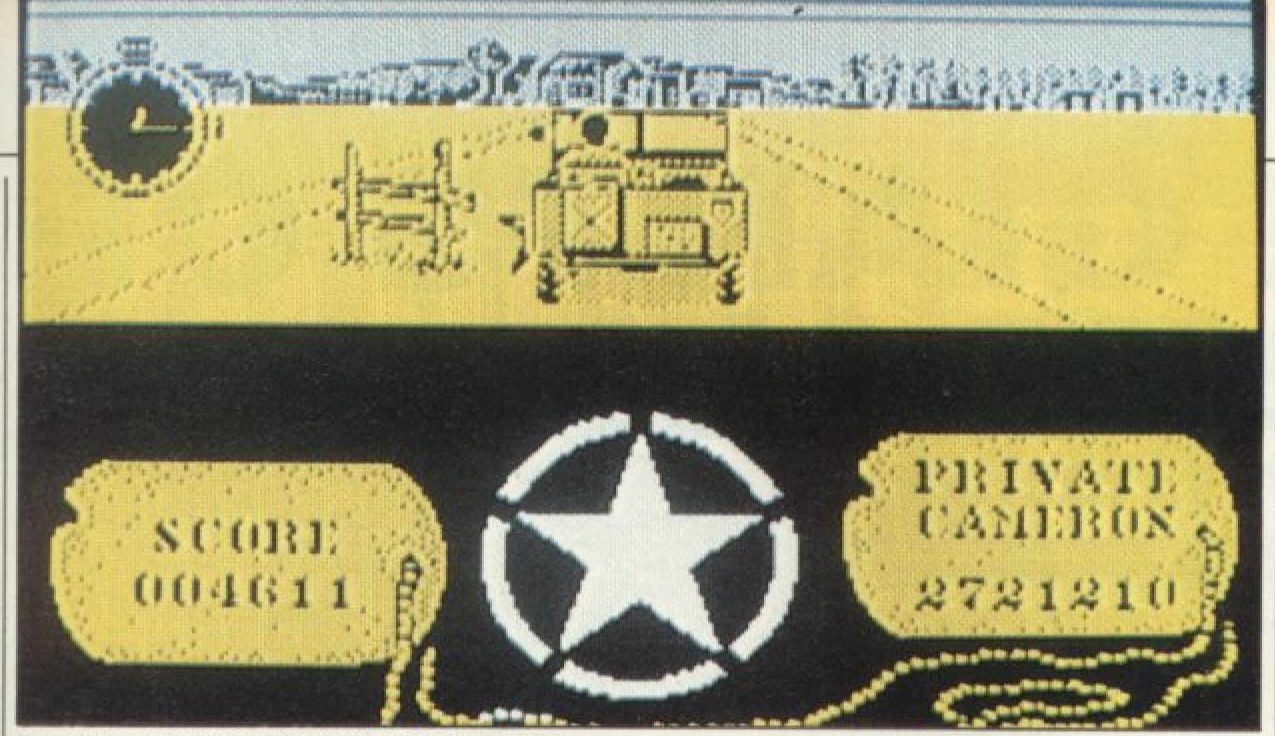
It's 1965 and you, an all American boy, have just turned 19. Life is good, filled with family, college and girls until the fateful day when your world is blown apart and you are drafted.

Up to four players can be recruited, their names entered and draft numbers given by the computer before play commences. Each player's progress is measured by their co-ordination, stamina,. and morale levels. The accuracy of target shooting, jeep driving, obstacle jumping, and unarmed combat moves determine the co-ordination rating, and stamina determines how long you endure each training event. Morale is a measure of your overall performance.

The first event is the assault course, and involves climbing walls, swinging along bars, leaping hurdles, and jumping

Fight the instructor as part of boot camp training – Commodore screen





The driving section from Nineteen *– Spectrum screen*

rocks and ditches. It consists of eight separate courses all of which feature time limits. Speed is vital to success. Obstacles are cleared by pressing fire to build up strength and releasing it when a meter at the bottom of the screen indicates full power. Points are awarded for obstacles successfully cleared in three attempts or less, and a bonus is given for time remaining. Frustration rules in this event; timing the release of the fire button to negotiate obstacles requires pixel-perfection.

Jeepers creepers

Event two tests your shooting ability. You have two and a half minutes to complete each of the eight ranges in the shooting event. A qualifying score has to be beaten to continue, with points ranging from 100 to 500 awarded for shooting soldiers (depending on which area of the body is hit). 1000 points are taken away if a woman or child is shot. The lack of a crosshair on-screen makes the targets difficult to locate solely through the telescopic sight.

Driving a jeep down eight, timed courses, whilst avoiding obstacles, makes up section three. Hay bales, cones, tyres, and fences decrease your speed temporarily and increase damage .This limits the jeeps maximum speed. Rocks, logs, tree stumps and oil drums also increase damage, and momentarily stop the vehicle. If the damage meter reaches maximum, the jeep becomes undrivable and the event ends. There is no sensation of speed as the jeep moves along and when traveling over hills it obscures objects on the road, making it impossible to avoid them.

The fourth event, unarmed combat, gives you the opportunity for revenge against the training instructors. Again consisting of eight rounds, but with an increasing time limit, four offensive moves are used to deplete the instructor's energy. To win the bout, your energy has to be higher or equal to his when time runs out. The event lacks any sensation of hitting or being hit and is far too short for you to gain sufficient experience to stand a chance against the instructor.

At the end of each event, the players' ratings are displayed and an overall comment made, from abysmal to exceptional. Recruit data can be saved for use in the forthcoming sequel: *Nineteen Part 2 – Combat Zone.*

COMMODORE 64/128 Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

The title screen is sufficiently moody and the accompanying music is not a bad rendition of Paul Hardcastle's hit. Sound, graphics and animation are polished, it's just a shame the gameplay is not of a similar standard.

OVERALL 62%

OTHER VERSIONS

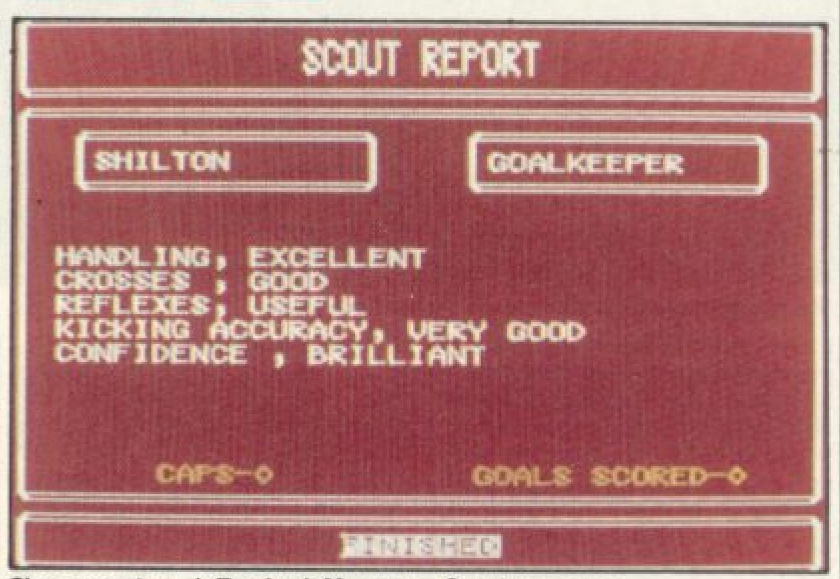
To be released on the Amstrad CPC and Spectrum 48/128 (cassette only) for the same price as other 8-bit versions, and for the Amiga at £19.95

"Frustration rules"

THE GIANTS OF FOOTBALL

TRACKSUIT MANAGER
Goliath Games

Doug Mathews, the designer of *Tracksuit Manager* is a familiar name when it comes to football strategy/ management games, having previously designed *The Double* handled by **Johnson Scanatron**. That title covered the UK League and FA Cup matches, now *Tracksuit Manager* intends cleaning up on the international football front, this time through Doug's own company, Goliath Games.



Shape your team in Tracksuit Manager *– Spectrum screen*

The scene for *Tracksuit Manager* is one of failure, with the country's top football team failing dismally in the World Cup. It's time to get a new manager and, as you are the rising star in football management, you get the job.

The first task is to select the squad which will prepare for, and play through, the Nations Cup to the finals and hopefully the World Cup thereafter. As the game is set in the arena of international football management it is not restricted to the England team. You can choose from 32 countries. Once a team is selected, each player's name, position and (if needed) club team must be entered before they join the squad. Each team's cumulative performance levels, playing characteristics and skills are based on the performance of the real-life teams themselves. After team setup, the eight league tables are randomly generated in preparation for the forthcoming Cup seasons.

The screen display follows the same format throughout the game, with the current menu title at the top, the commands and actions being displayed in the middle section and the menu commands taking up the lower portion of the screen. From the main menu eight options can be accessed, the DATE option advances the time immediately to the next match to be played. SQUAD allows the manager to determine the structure of his squad, defining the number of goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders and reserves. A report can be called up detailing a player's capabilities, reactions, skill, confidence and stamina levels – useful for determining whether they are fit enough to be in the squad.

The number of caps gained and goals scored are also displayed. The SCOUT option sends a scout to watch other teams and their players in action, reporting back on the team's playing style, line-up, overall performance level and individual player's strengths and weaknesses.

Blow by blow
When your team is ready, the PLAY option becomes accessible. Once the match team is picked (including substitutes) you select the playing positions, individual's methods of play and the team's tactics as a whole. It is these tactic-specification screens which introduce the many variable factors that make *Tracksuit Manager* much more strategic and tactical than other management games. Match details are displayed in a blow-by-blow manner, similar to a real-life football commentary, the highlights scrolling up the screen with the pitch shown underneath – the current area of play is highlighted by a red bar. At half-time, player and team tactics can be changed and substitutes brought on if necessary.



Up against France in Tracksuit Manager *– Commodore screen*

The WATCH option is similar to SCOUT except the manager watches a chosen match in its entirety and it can prove more informative than scout reports. CUP brings up the fixtures calendar.

Using the DIARY option, you may not only list all the fixtures to be played over the next month but also set up a single or tour of 'friendly' matches designed to test the team's mettle. SAVE provides a tape storage facility (disk option is included on the Commodore version).

Tracksuit Manager is played through each month of each year, moving through the Nations Cup qualification rounds in October, onto the finals and the World Cup. Every month, newspaper reports appear detailing how you are coping and your team's performance so far. The game takes the traditional side of football management and expands on it without incorporating the financial side familiar to players of *Football Manager 1* and *2*. This omission has allowed the programmers to concentrate on the most important part of football management, the players, their tactics and the all-important matches. The resulting program leaves the rest standing due to its depth, scope and flexibility.

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £9.95

The sheer volume of football data has left no memory for anything more than primitive presentation. The Spectrum game is bland in appearance with no sound at all. Text is predominant but the screen update is, at times, annoyingly slow. With no multiload it is amazing how the programmer squeezed so much into the humble 48K.

OVERALL 83%

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.95

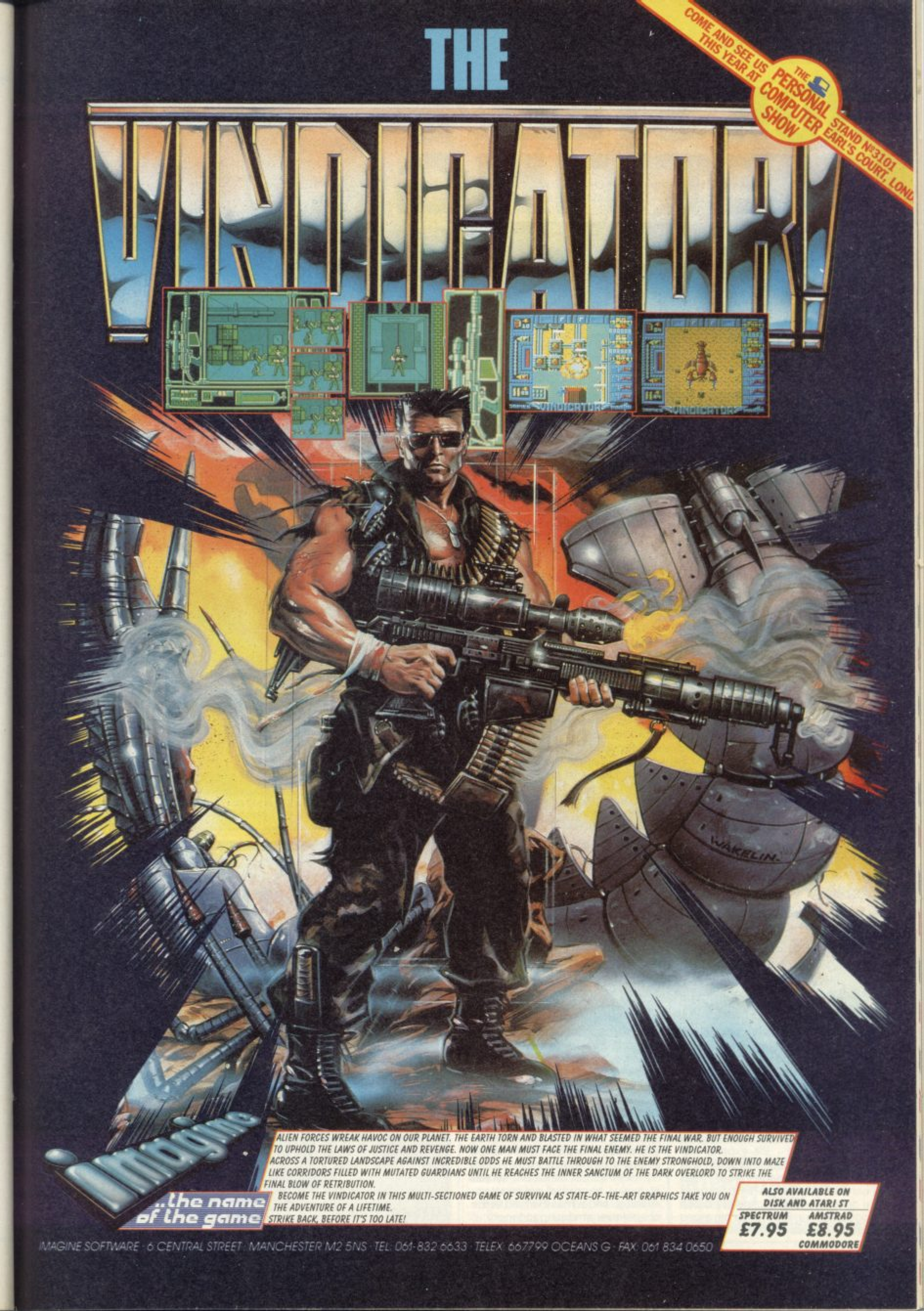
Simple but neatly laid out, Tracksuit Manager wins no prizes for presentation. Sound is nonexistent and match graphics are kept to a minimum. This is a prime example of a game where it's the strategy that counts and the Commodore delivers the goods extremely well.

OVERALL 88%

OTHER VERSIONS

An Amstrad CPC version may follow later in the year with an Amiga and ST game a possibility. At present though there are no firm plans, prices or release dates.

"Tracksuit Manager **takes the traditional side of football management and expands on it**"



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ALIEN FORCES WREAK HAVOC ON OUR PLANET. THE EARTH TORN AND BLASTED IN WHAT SEEMED THE FINAL WAR. BUT ENOUGH SURVIVED TO UPHOLD THE LAWS OF JUSTICE AND REVENGE. NOW ONE MAN MUST FACE THE FINAL ENEMY. HE IS THE VINDICATOR.
ACROSS A TORTURED LANDSCAPE AGAINST INCREDIBLE ODDS HE MUST BATTLE THROUGH TO THE ENEMY STRONGHOLD, DOWN INTO MAZE LIKE CORRIDORS FILLED WITH MUTATED GUARDIANS UNTIL HE REACHES THE INNER SANCTUM OF THE DARK OVERLORD TO STRIKE THE FINAL BLOW OF RETRIBUTION.
BECOME THE VINDICATOR IN THIS MULTI-SECTIONED GAME OF SURVIVAL AS STATE-OF-THE-ART GRAPHICS TAKE YOU ON THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME.
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ROB STEEL'S GETTING ADVENTUROUS

STEEL SHAVINGS

Ingrid's back looks no more attractive than her front. Let's hope the game is better than its prequel.

The Spectrum rules the adventure pages yet again. Topologika have released their BBC/Acorn games for the +3 – five of which have come my way for review.

Also featured; *The Quest For The Golden Egg Cup* from Mastertronic/Smart Egg Software. An unusual adventure, available for the Commodore 64/128 and Spectrum, it is a game to test ones lateral thinking.

***Mortville Manor* makes it on to the Amiga and the combined graphics and sound help to make it a winner.**

Swiss company Linel are about to release *Ice and Fire*, an adventure with more than one way to win. Incorporating attractive, digitised graphics you can choose to play one of nine characters, ranging from a Thief to a Cleric. Unfortunately only three days are given in which to reach the height of your chosen profession and find a last resting place.

Level Nine haven't died yet! During the first week of September they are to release a brand new adventure, *Lancelot*. The second title to appear under the Mandarin label, *Lancelot* comes in three parts incorporating over 60,000 words and high quality graphics. The adventure faithfully traces the legend from the founding of the Round Table through to the successful conclusion of the hunt for The Holy Grail.

Level Nine are also set to release *Gnome II: Ingrid's Back* the sequel to *Gnome Ranger* in which Ingrid Bottomlow horrifies the inhabitants of Little Moaning by managing to return home there.

Both adventures are to be released on all major 8 and 16-bit formats – £14.95 and £19.95 respectively.



Could this be the fabled Camelot?



Attractive pictures make up for the odd text. Thankfully the translation of this version will be brushed up for the finished product. Amiga screen.

MORTVILLE MANOR

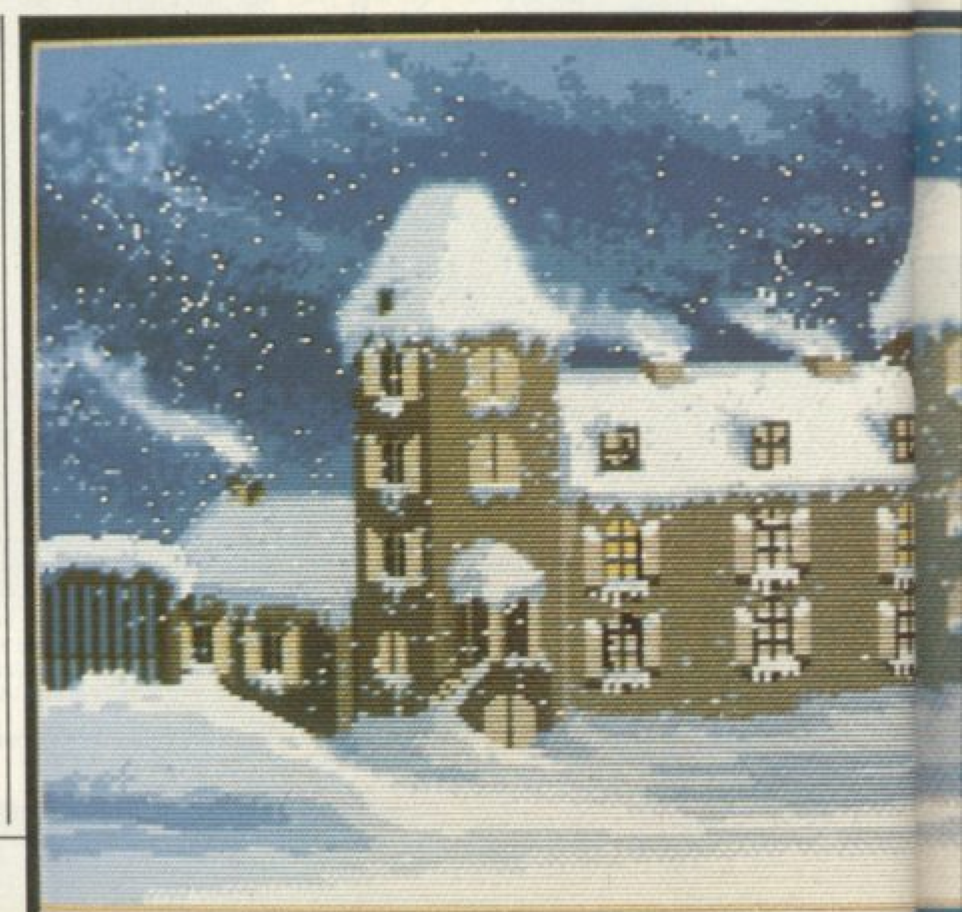
Lankhor
AMIGA Diskette: £24.95

Lankhor are a French software company who, to date, have been responsible for games such as *Killdozers* – reviewed in TGM **009** (37%). As such they are fairly new to the British market, and have yet to make an impact. *Mortville Manor* is their first UK adventure, and, as it utilises mostly sound and graphics, the problems of translation are minimal.

February 1951: I stand outside the manor, driving snow stinging my skin before melting to small rivulets of cold memories which run down my face. I was born here, but adulthood and its accompanying life-experiences drown childhood thoughts and render the place hard and unfriendly. Julie has died. She was a dear friend to me, and her death occured under circumstances which arouse my P.I. curiosity. Something is amiss. I determine to find out what.

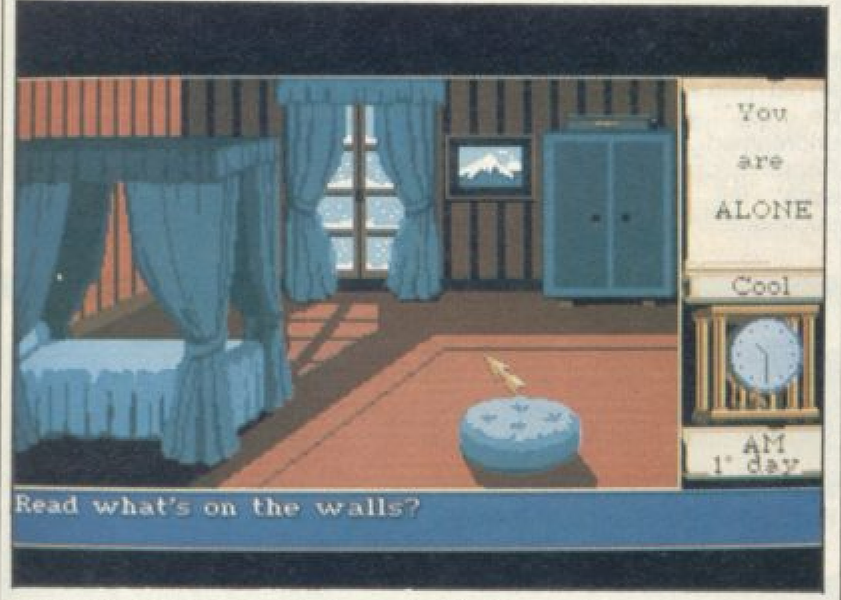
Max the Butler lets me in. He seems an amiable fellow and, contrary to popular belief, probably didn't do it. However, everyone is guilty until proven innocent. Showing me to my room he tells me that meals are served at twelve noon and seven in the evening, and a mass is held in the chapel every morning at ten.

I decide to explore the house





Action takes place in the chapel of **Mortville Manor**



Time for arrest?

and try to discover as much as possible before midday lunch – where hopefully I will be able to gently interrogate the occupants as they gather to dine.

The carpeted landing outside my room reveals many doors through which I systematically search. Some of the rooms beyond them are unoccupied, some are not. The stairs at the end of the landing look particularly interesting and further investigation reveals a little used room at the top. A thorough but speedy search – people are apt to catch you when you're where you shouldn't be – rewards me with many items to ponder over. A photograph, some rope, a flute and an old book.

The chapel and cellar have strange engravings etched into the stone – the meaning of which may be gleaned from the master of the manor. Outside, a well waits for the inexperienced adventurer to explore its depths and venturing too far into the snow-covered surrounding area causes an early, frosty demise.



No business like snow business.. the mysterious **Mortville Manor**

In a manor of seeking

Most of the screen is taken up with an attractive graphic representation of your current location which is usually accompanied by suitable sound effects or music. Completely mouse-controlled, the system is simplicity itself to use. The menu-headings are; Desk (a reminder of the authors), Inv (objects carried), Mov (locations available to move to), Act (a choice of actions such as Look, Turn, Read etc), Self (actions relating to you or objects carried), and Dis (persons present with whom you may converse).

Conversation with characters is possible via another menu which displays a list of available subjects. Those interviewed reply in speech (complete with french accent) and are sometimes difficult to comprehend Fortunately you can get them to repeat anything they might say. The more you discover about the manor and its inhabitants the longer the list of subjects becomes. However, this does not necessarily mean the interviewee will give up any information he or she possesses. Prudence and discretion are required at all times to gain knowledge.

Mortville Manor is a pleasure to play, occasionally frustrating but always intriguing, it takes you gently by the hand and slowly reveals its secrets as you search the locations and question the suspects. The first in a series, this is a great adventure which will hopefully be at least matched by its promised sequels.

ATMOSPHERE 83%
INTERACTION 78%
OVERALL 81%

TOPOLOGIKA SERIES

Topologika

Originally written for the Acorn computer some years ago, Topologika have at last released their range of adventures for the Spectrum +3. As five have found their way to my grabbing hands, and space won't permit full reviews of them all, may I present small but beautifully formed examinations of *Philosopher's Quest*, *Kingdom Of Hamil*, *Countdown To Doom*, *Return To Doom* and *Acheton*. All allow the player to link commands via a comma or 'Then'. They understand 'Get All' and 'Drop All', and they also feature a Save/Load game facility and include an in-built help routine.

PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST

Spectrum +3 Diskette: £9.95

Sniffing around old junk shops is a pastime of yours, you enjoy nothing better than to root through dusty tomes and antiquated bric-a-brac in search of interesting items. One such shop, just off Market street, is the home of an object which is to change your life – a magic wand.

Finding it is a delight, waving it is a temptation that cannot be resisted . . .

What took place in the next few seconds is hard to recall. It was as if the world has been inverted, and you along with it. Blackness and a sense of non-existence reigned until the swirling ceased and you found yourself back in the shop. Only it wasn't the shop! You had been transported to part of an intricate cave system. As you struggle to make sense of what's going on, a voice in your head tells you that the only way to get back to your world is to find treasure and bring it safely back to this location, ensuring sufficient payment for misuse of the wand.

You begin the quest for freedom in the shop, with a choice of objects to aid your task; a teabag, cushion, keys, a sausage and an aqualung. Only two of the five may be taken out of the shop, so a careful decision is required – actually (without giving too much away) three may be taken if you throw one out through the door.

Going South leads to darkness and death if light is not found. A simple enough puzzle to solve, although how you can see the lamp to pick it up in the dark is questionable.

From here the trek through North/South passages, anterooms, gloomy corridors and cave mazes is very reminiscent of *Colossal Adventure*, *Classic Adventure* and games of that ilk.

That the game does not recognise 'Examine' should not deter potential players for objects and their uses are sufficiently explained in either the location description or inventory.

Philosopher's Quest shows its age but you can't keep a good storyline down and Topologika's rendition is fine.

ATMOSPHERE 68%
INTERACTION 54%
OVERALL 61%

PRESS ANY KEY

COUNTDOWN TO DOOM

SPECTRUM +3 Diskette: £9.95

Doom, a planet famed across the galaxy as a potentially lucrative source of income, holds treasures and mysteries which only the most experienced of adventurers may uncover. Orbiting the planet in your space ship. The scanner just begins to pick up land objects when you come under attack and are forced to make a crash landing.

Doom is inhospitable, its environment changes from frozen wastes to steaming jungles in a matter of yards. The creatures that inhabit the planet are less than friendly and sometimes difficult to comprehend.

You have all this to contend with plus the task of repairing your ship before it collapses in a heap of twisted, useless metal.

Again the parser does not understand 'Examine', a fact which is more irritating than in *Philosopher's Quest* due to the strange alien landscape and items therein. However, location and object descriptions are sufficiently detailed to give some hints toward progress.

What does ruin *Countdown To Doom* is the number of instant deaths. At the start it seems a demise lurks around every corner – the only way to become aware of them is to actually die and start again. Thankfully the incentive given to see the game through just outweighs the tedium of these numerous deaths.

ATMOSPHERE 63%
INTERACTION 54%
OVERALL 59%

RETURN TO DOOM

SPECTRUM +3 Diskette: £12.95

The sequel to *Countdown to Doom* involves a return to the inhospitable planet. This time, whilst flying through the universe, you receive a Mayday call detailing the crash landing on Doom of four people, one of which is the Ambassador of Regina. They request immediate rescue and you, being the hero, cannot refuse. A safe landing precedes your second adventure on Doom.

Instant deaths abound yet again, although on occasions you get the chance to take back a move should you make a silly mistake – walking north for example!

From the landing area, puzzles and early retirement await your every move. Mouth-like caves which crush you when entered are to the west, a life-squeezing Python lurks in the jungle to the north (as do odorous flowers which prevent your passing) and a metal door to the south blocks your way. To the east the ground consists of a spongy substance which makes for interesting effect when objects are throw around on it. A key is to be found to the North East but it is guarded by a baby Boogatiger whose parents and grandparents think ill of your trying to pick it up.

The eventual direction to head in is east, all other puzzles need to be solved before progress is possible.

Consisting of alien puzzles and places which should keep you thinking for some time, *Return To Doom* is a worthy sequel.

ATMOSPHERE 67%
INTERACTION 52%
OVERALL 60%

KINGDOM OF HAMIL

SPECTRUM +3 Diskette: £9.95

Hamil is a land of sorcery and romance; of strange beings, immense fountains, castles and kings.

You are the rightful heir to the throne of Hamil, stolen away as a child, you return to face unknown odds and reclaim your rightful inheritance.

Although not a bad game, this is the worst of the Topologika quintet, even the better elements such as location and object descriptions are none too thrilling. The characters are fantastic and quite unbelievable – even for a world of fantasy. Vampires, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Hobgoblins and Snarks all inhabit the game – although ways to their demise are fairly easily found if thought about.

You begin in a chapel, the only way is down and puzzle of the slab should not hinder progress for too long. Once in the complex below ground, the problems get tougher. A vampire is resting in his coffin and he has something you want, getting it without blood-loss is not that simple. Somehow you have to find sunlight to prevent him being a pain in the neck. South of the Crypt sits a strange old woman seemingly guarding a silver goblet, try to take it and you discover she is in fact a Hobgoblin as she proceeds to carry out one of the many instant deaths. No warning is given of what she is or that she will kill you – only that she looks odd. Some use of the examine command would have been welcome here.

Once you get into the habit of saving your game before turning a corner, the game becomes a little better – but tedious. If you expect the unexpected and don't require too much logic plot-wise, *Kingdom Of Hamil* could be just the adventure for you.

ATMOSPHERE 46%
INTERACTION 49%
OVERALL 48%

ACHETON

SPECTRUM +3 Diskette: £9.95

The mysterious ruling Council Of Acheton issue a message to sentient life-forms everywhere. They challenge the greatest adventurers in the universe to uncover the secrets of their realm, Acheton. For those who succeed the rewards will be great; riches power and knowledge, for those who fail . . . death.

Standing at the end of a road with a building to the North gave me a sense of Deja Vu. The feeling increased as I entered the building to discover a lamp, a bunch of keys and an empty bottle. How long before I found the grate leading down to the cave system? In fact it wasn't long at all, unfortunately this particular grate opened only to allow access to a well and a freezing death. Obviously there had to be another way down.

Travelling west along the road through the forest, I came across an old mine entrance, thinking it to be the way to treasures undreamed of, I descended. Regret quickly followed as a loose slate fell on top of me, subsequently ending the game.

There had to be another way down!

East from the building took me to an enchanted forest, the trees closed in behind me blocking off the exit. To climb a tree seemed the logical answer, but which one. Each tree (when descended) took me to a different location, one of which was a small clearing consisting of a hole leading down to a chamber and a network of tunnels.

By the time I reached the 'immense hall of smooth rock' in which lay the 'large boulder with the characters "J4" inscribed on it', I had had enough. Level Nine released a better version of this type of adventure years ago. I suggest you buy their *Colossal Adventure* if you want to take part in this style of quest. Although Topologika's version is by no means poor, it doesn't match up to Level Nine's expertise.

ATMOSPHERE 66%
INTERACTION 57%
OVERALL 62%

STEEL TIPS

More space means more tips . . . I hope some of those listed below help prevent your loss of hair.

MICRO MUD

Virgin

The following instructions – thanks to MS Sullivan of Preston – take you to the thatched cottage area and into the hut (a reasonably safe place to store your treasures).

From the narrow road between lands; Brief, Fbrief, W, W, S, W, Get all, E, S, W, Get all, E, E, E, Get all, W, W, U, U, N, Get all, S, W, Get all, E, E, Get all, W, D, D, Unlock Door, Open Door, S, Get all, N, D, D, S, SE, S, SE, Get all, NE, N, SE, E, S, E, Drop All, Get Moose, U, Put Moose on wall D, Get all, U, U, Drop parasol, Drop umbrella, drop keys, take moose from wall.

Use the parasol to reach the sea.

GUILD OF THIEVES

Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird

Help the old man with his trunk and he gets the gatekeeper to lower the drawbridge.

Break the coal in the fire bucket to reveal a fossil.

Take only the oil painting.

Look inside the cushion for the five ferg note.

Open the red ball to find the diamond ring.

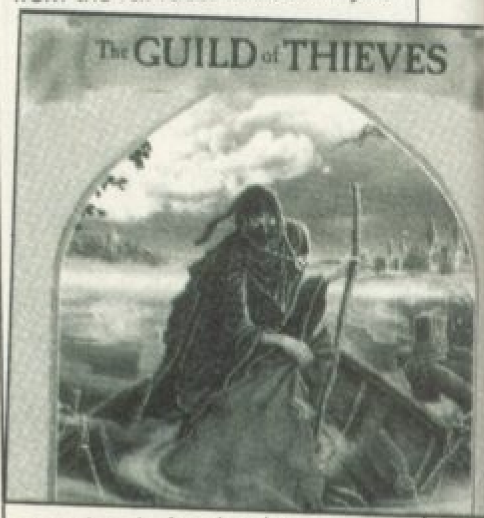
Tie the cotton to the cue to make a fishing rod (the maggot from the tub under the bed is the bait).

If you hear the gatekeeper calling, go straight to the courtyard and bet five fergs on the grey rat.

At the top of the cellar stairs, pull the pipe from the wall, pick it up and open the stopcock. Wait once before closing it and wait again for the water in the now flooded cellar to recede.

Shout to the miller to stop the vanes before entering the mill.

Accept his gum and buy the lute from him with the cheque won from the rat race. Place it in your swag bag before leaving.



Unlock the sarcophagus with the finger bone.

THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGGCUP

Mastertronic/Smart Egg Software
Commodore 64/128 Cassette: £1.99

Smart Egg Software made a name for themselves when they released *Rigel's Revenge*, a successful adventure which still has many people pondering over its devious puzzles. The team at SES follow it up with another adventure which uses an original, if fantastic, plot concerning God and the loss of his golden eggcup.



Eggcup: a game for hard boiled adventurers

Whilst strolling down the M5, boredom overtakes you and before you know what's happening, you step out in front of a speeding C5. When your senses return you find yourself standing in the centre of a golden temple. God approaches (complete with turban) and tells you that in return for finding his stolen eggcup he will reincarnate you – just in time for world war III. Failure to carry out this task will result in your soul being turned into an egg ,which God will then eat.

Humour (much like God) is omnipresent and the game should be approached with tongue planted firmly in cheek. Barely interactive characters adorn heaven, the three main ones being God, Dandalf and Thoron, all very old jokes (mostly at the expense of *The Hobbit*) but ones which work well in the game.

For Gods sake

Beginning in the golden temple, the way to progress is down. A quick look around rewards you with a multitude of objects.

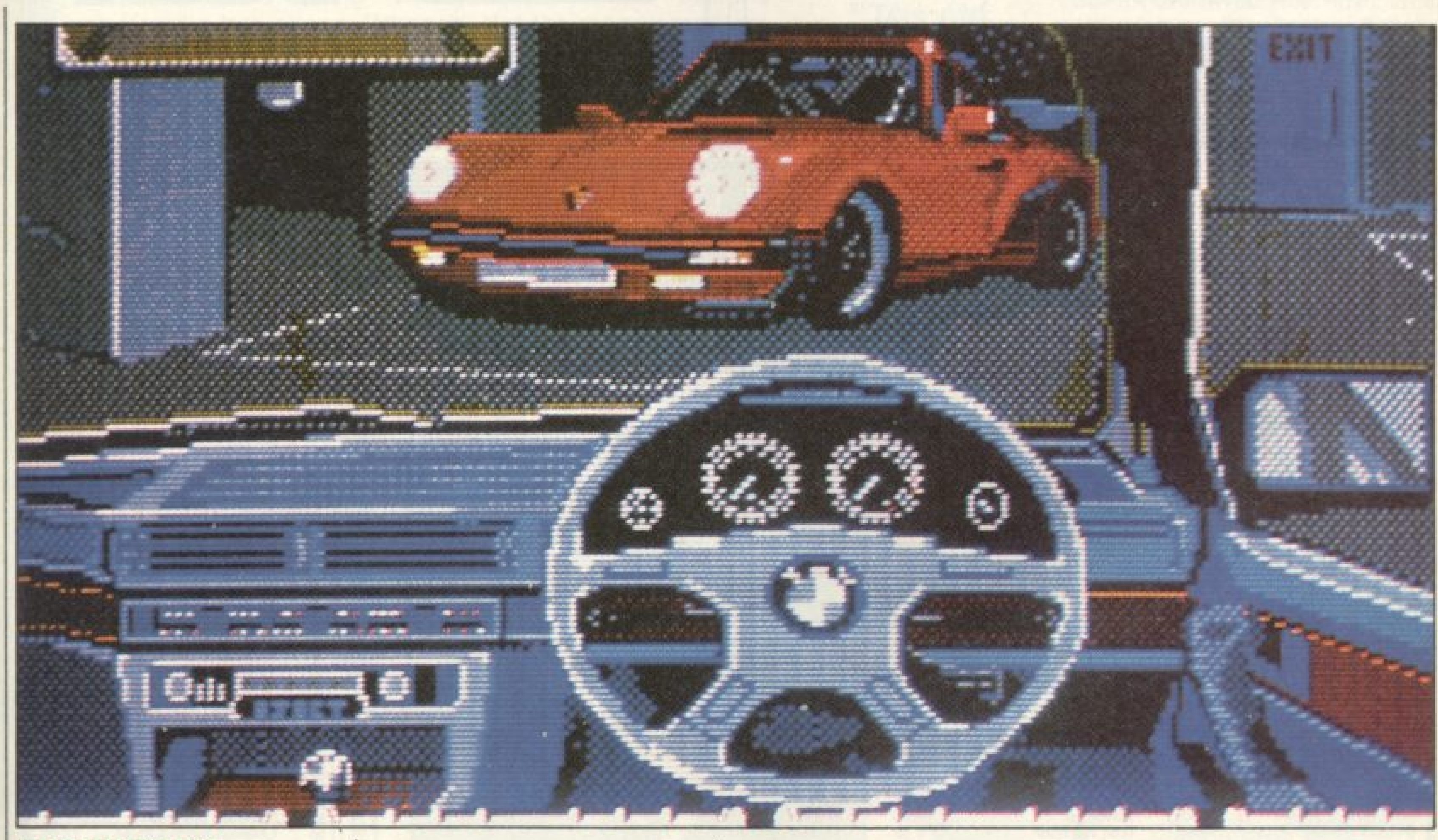
Paths, clearings, railway stations and a guarded hut greet you on the lower level and strange items such as a dead Sherlock are yours for the taking.

Successful negotiation of a simple maze leads you to a room in which is placed a stone seat. When it is sat upon, you are projected backward to another room and access to the river.

Although humour is usually a cop-out in adventures, the comic elements in *The Quest For The Golden Eggcup* are surprisingly amusing. Far from childish, they are a delight to encounter and bring relief from the taxing problems faced on your quest.

The parser is more than adequate and although the location descriptions are sparse, the graphics that accompany them help to create an atmosphere. At a budget price this is one that should not be missed, even by die-hard Infocom fans.

ATMOSPHERE 77%
INTERACTION 76%
OVERALL 77%



CORRUPTION

Magnetic Scrolls/Rainbird

A little help to get you started . . . my thanks to Bruce Marshall of Congleton, Cheshire.

Get everything from the cabinet in your office and proceed to the toilet as soon as possible to retrieve the cocaine from the cistern.

Take the list to the dealing room and return to your secretary's office to take the envelope containing the cheque for Charpointer.

Go to the underground car park and unlock your BMW, get the screwdriver from the glove compartment. Break the Volvo's window with the screwdriver and take the folder containing the affidavit.

Go to Theresa's office for 10:00 am, when she leaves get the key from the drawer and the letter from the shredder. Unlock David's door and take the tape from his desk. Go back to your car and play the tape.

At 11:25, dial Peter to overhear a conversation between Bill and David. Go to the restaurant to keep the lunch appointment with your wife, Jenny.

On leaving the restaurant you are pushed under a passing car and subsequently taken to hospital. Wait for the nurse to leave and get everything from the cabinet and the empty bed. Go south and take everything from the locker and the stethoscope from the polar bear. Go north then east to casualty, put everything in the pillow case and wait till 3:06

If you have any tips or maps that you would like to add to my own to pass on to TGM readers, please send them to: STEEL TIPS, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

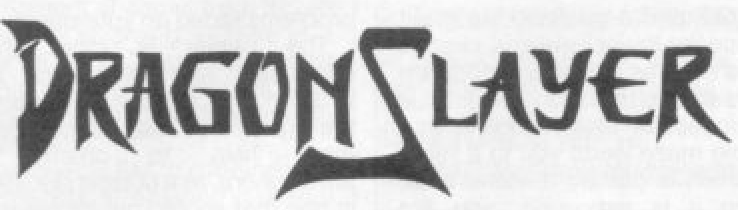
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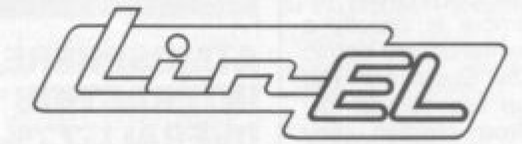
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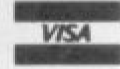


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TELEREVOLUTION! TELEREVOLUTION! TELEREVOLUTION! TELEREVOLUTION!

Things sure move fast in the zero gravity atmosphere of satellite television! There seem to be contradictory announcements every other day. But the truth is much more bizarre than all the hype

As you read this, every single one of the European satellite TV channels is losing money. Millions and millions vapourising into space. Whoosh. Yet the money men are jumping on the space bandwagon like fleas on a dog, lured on by one thing: the prospect of huge advertising revenues.

Last time I wrote about direct broadcasting from space in TGM was nine months ago, and I was foolish enough to make a few predictions. Okay, so I got the names, prices and politics right, but I blooped on the time-scale. What I thought was going to happen in 1989 is happening right now.

Firstly, the gear is getting cheaper. £1,000 last year, £500 today, £200 by Christmas. Secondly, the gear is getting smaller, with nine-foot wide monster dishes requiring planning permission giving way to a 45 centimetre baby that you can Blutac to the window. Thirdly, the old regime is collapsing, with the television licence under fire and a Government White Paper about to free up regional TV. The Telerevolution has begun and it will affect everyone who owns a TV set. And that means you!

So far, I have been unable to find a clear, simple analysis to guide me through the mess, and so, with typical modesty, I am forced to write it myself. Here goes then, a past and future history of the Telerevolution, and what it means for British viewers.

July 1923

Television was invented and patented by Vladimir Zworykin, a refugee from the Russian Revolution. The first television image was transmitted on October 2 1925 by John Logie Baird, a former boot polish salesman, jam bottler and medicated sock technician. On November 2 1936 the first high-definition TV service in the world was launched from the Alexandra Palace by the BBC. Not much happened for 20 years or so, until the complacency of the Beeb was given a hefty boot up the backside with the arrival of commercial television in Britain. Since then, British television has run to a couple of major innovations every decade; satire 'n' swearing plus BBC 2 in the Sixties, colour and all-day transmissions in the Seventies, home videos and Channel 4 in the Eighties. And as the Nineties loom before us the whole show is up for grabs, thanks to the dismantling of international barriers and satellite TV.

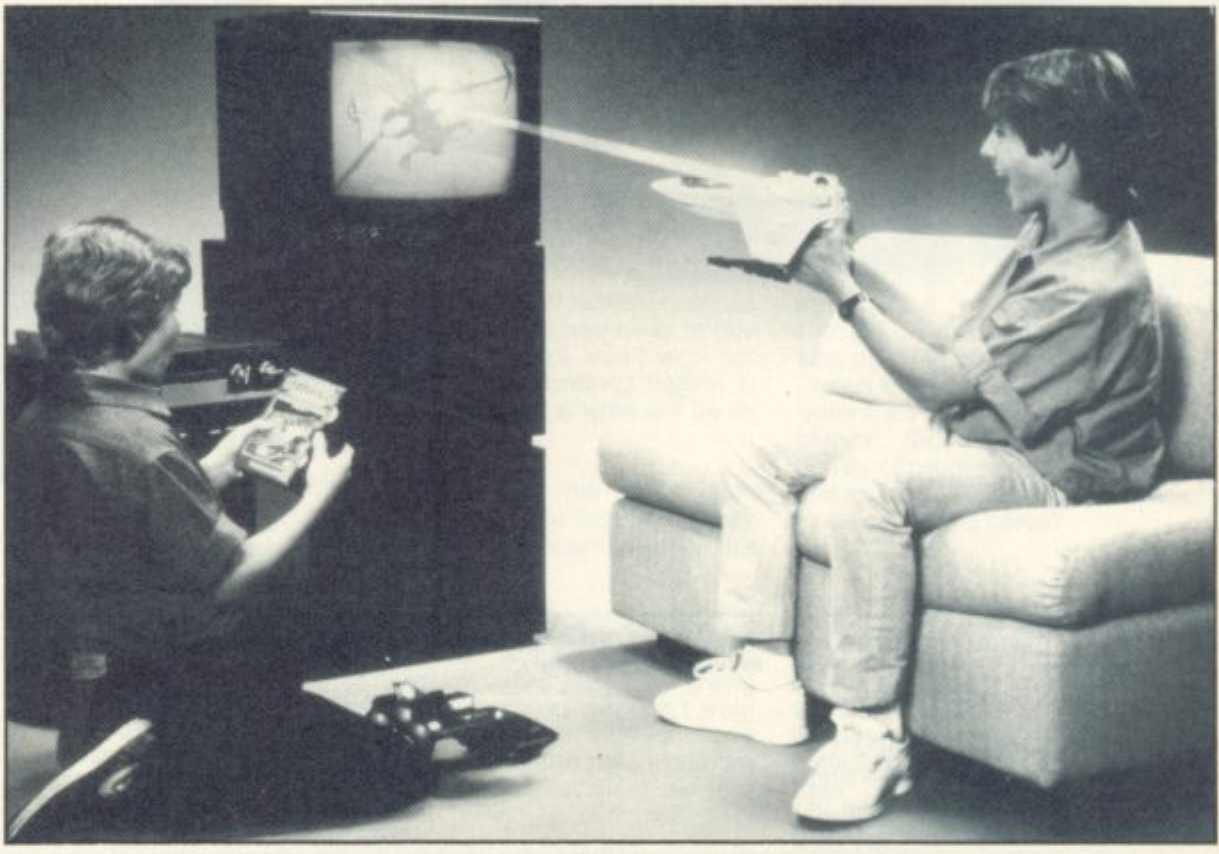
"The old regime is collapsing . . . the telerevolution has begun and it will affect everyone who owns a television set"

August 1988

There are *30* satellite channels beamed at us from Europe right now, most of which I reviewed in *Heavens Above* (TGM**003**) Here is an update of what's on offer today.

SUPER CHANNEL: Free. Now into its second year, this 'best of British' mishmash originally broadcast BBC and ITV programmes, but now includes American soaps, *Captain Power* (banned in Scandinavia folks!), Dutch comedy and the pop pap of *Music Box*.

SKY CHANNEL: Free, but may well cost a fee if they scramble their signal in a year or so. Over six years old, and Europe's first satellite station. Early morning Scandinavian show, followed by morning kids programs, pop videos, adventure series and



Interactive TV with the* Captain Power *cartoon





sport. A news headlines service has just begun, and the *Deadly Earnest Horror Show* looks promising.

THE ARTS CHANNEL: Costs £30, but nobody pays it, because the signal is unscrambled! Taking over the Sky slot every midnight, superb drama

The Amstrad Fidelity satellite system – quite a dish

and music from all over the world.

THE CHILDREN'S CHANNEL: Free at present, but will be charging £12 to £18 a year when they scramble in 1989-90. 5am to 3pm of tacky cartoons and dopey studio-based shows, plus occasional wildlife programmes and *Worzel Gummidge*.

CNN INTERNATIONAL: Supposed to be for private cable distribution only, but anyone can pick it up! Excellent US news service, and live action which puts British coverage to shame.

MTV EUROPE: Free. Round-the-clock music videos, sodden with adverts. But getting better with regular slots like *Metal Hammer*, *New Visions* and *Yo!*

PREMIERE: £75 a year. An average of eight box-office smash movies a day, with adult stuff after 10pm.

LIFESTYLE: £30 a year, which includes subscription to *Screensport*. Utter dross for the brain-dead. American game shows, Australian soaps, **Russell Grant's** horror-scopes, and a resident **David Hamilton**. Undoubtedly the smell of things to come.

SCREENSPORT: Seven hours a night of everything from tiddlywinks to sumo wrestling. Well, at least it keeps *Lifestyle* off the air!

RADIO RADIO: Free. The most intriguing development, launched last month by Virgin Broadcasting, this is Branson's all-night rock station. If you live in the areas covered by Yorkshire Radio Network, GWR, Radio Trent and Radio Forth, you don't even need a satellite dish, just tune to your commercial radio band. Then turn off to the burbles of Puby Wax, Jonathan Woss and Nicky Yorne.

As well as these, the more specialised stations are listed as follows. Free, unscrambled reception is denoted by italics.

WORLDNET Paranoid US propaganda.
TV-5 French language news, music and soft porn.
FILMNET An excellent quirky choice of movies.
KINDERNET Dutch tiny tots channel.
TELECLUB Swiss/German movies and soft porn.
TV SPORT French language screensport.
SAT-1 Crummy entertainment for US soldiers.
3-SAT German equivalent to Channel 4.
RAI-UNO Italian entertainment channel.
CANAL 10 Spanish equivalent of ITV.
VISNEWS Superb uncensored global news.
In addition, there are a further ten channels, all scrambled, for business and foreign language specialists.

November 4th 1988

When Ariane Flight 27 blasts into space, she will be carrying the most important entertainment satellite so far in her belly: the 16-channel **Astra**. Astra begins beaming down to a bemused public this Christmas, and the first channels to commit are all owned by the man who thinks that *The Sun* is a newspaper, Rupert Murdoch, assisted by the man who thinks that computers are tubes of toothpaste, Alan Sugar.

Amstrad is knocking out one million 60cm satellite dishes over the next year, pitched at the breakthrough price of £199 including VAT and the all important tuner. What Murdoch has done is to beat all of the opposition by at least six months in the satellite war, as well as to bypass the current debate about sex and violence on British TV (satellite stations are not restrained by the new government watch-poodle). Here's what's coming up from Murdoch.

"The BSM satellite will only need a mini satellite dish nailed to your window box"

SKY NEWS: 24-hour continuous news, pulling in location reports from global TV stations as well as the Murdoch newspaper resources. God help us if what he's done to *The Times* and the *News Of The World* is anything to go by.

SKY MOVIE: Feature films for the masses. This channel will be in heavy competition with other established movie stations, as well as the video rental market, but Murdoch won't have any problem getting the rights to anything from 20th Century Fox. He owns it.

EUROSPORT: 24-hour dredging of all sporting events covered by European national broadcasters, including the BBC. *Screen Sport*, which is run by WH Smith, has already tried to have it banned by the European Commission for monopolies, but they don't stand a chance of stopping it. They are obviously uneasy that all of Murdoch's new commercial channels are to be completely free, whereas Smith's *Lifestyle* and *Screen Sport* cost thirty quid a year subscription.

SKY CHANNEL: 18 hours of 'general interest' (whatever that means) plus six hours for the arts. Sky has already devoured £40 million since it began, and no doubt another £40 million is available to boost the 11 million homes where it is available throughout Europe, Britain and Ireland at present.

August 15th 1989

Even though Astra will have a six to nine month lead, its monopoly is destined to be short lived. The real satellite war begins next year when a private McDonnell Douglas Delta rocket plonks the British Satellite Broadcasting pod into orbit. BSB reeks of quality and money, and is aiming for half a million paying subscribers by the end of 1990, rising to two and a half million in 1992. With a budget of over £600 million, they might just do it, especially as they're spending £100 million on new programmes in the first year alone.

The good news is that the BSB satellite will only need a mini satellite dish nailed to your window box, a 45cm dish will suffice anywhere in Britain, and the cost will be (surprise, surprise) £199. The bad news is that the Amstrad system won't work for BSB. When broadcasting begins in October 1989, this is what will be on offer.

"The quality of programmes? Who knows, and as long as they value profit above excellence, who cares?"

GALAXY: Round the clock light entertainment for morons, with a very interesting experimental slot for teleshopping.

ZIG-ZAG: Aimed at the kiddiewinkies, new ideas are already being commissioned, but RSB ain't giving much away because 'we don't want someone else rushing off and gazumping us'. If the new ideas are anything like as excellent as *The Storyteller*, then I can see vast numbers of adults tuning in.

SCREEN: Four films a night, but you will have to pay an additional £80 a year to watch them. Due to the recent moral backlashers, all BSB receivers are to be fitted with a Parental Lock, designed to keep infant eyes shielded from gore and genitalia. The parents will probably have to get their kids to show them how to operate it, just like they do with the video!

NOW: 18 hours a day in direct competition with BBC and ITV news, sport and current affairs. One of the most exciting satellite proposals is scheduled for the evening slot, with rock and classical concerts. This will be in glorious stereo, and either live or of digital recorded quality.

Other channels may well find themselves on either the Astra or the BSB satellites, and these include:

LANDSCAPE: A surreal idea, consisting of musak and restful pictures.
BRAVO: the existing cable channel that specialises in vintage movies.
HOME VIDEO: a specialist channel showing independent films.
INDRA DHNUSH: drama and musicals in Hindi.

February 1990

These are not predictions, events are moving much too fast to get into that game once more. From the information that I have managed to gather to date, the following things are highly likely to happen in 18 months time.

Britain will be enjoying **Channel 5**, the new national commercial television station. The BBC television licence fee will begin to be phased out. British holidaymakers will be able to watch BBC, ITV and other British private television channels anywhere in Europe. BBC 2 and Channel 4 will be broadcast by satellite as well as earth stations.

Teleshopping, bulletin boards, electronic banking, travel agents, estate agents etc. via domestic receivers will begin to make the High Street concept redundant. The world shortage of decoder chips will end, and satellite receiver/tuner units will fall below the £100 barrier. A flood of new consumers will opt for the unscrambled free systems, and the subscription channels will be forced to abandon their charges. At this point the television skirmishes will be over and the real war will begin!

The generals in this war will be (in alphabetical order) Alan Bond, Richard Branson, Terence Conran, Michael Grade, Robert Maxwell, Rupert Murdoch and Alan Sugar. The victors will be those who can win the biggest slice of advertising. The quality of programmes? Who knows, and as long as they value profit above excellence, who cares?

Next month: Have you passed your driving test yet? No? By the time you have, your dashboard may well be all-singing, all-dancing and showing cartoons on your windscreen! Old Croucher's been playing with techno toys again, this time the computerised vroom-vrooms. Test drive into the future with TGM. . . .

GOING RIGHT OVERBOARD

Derek Jameson, Aussie soap stars and a game of Oedipal frolics designed to show your friends just what a warped nutter you really are. Surely some mistake? Do we mean TGM's going overboard? We surely do!

Do they mean us? 'Yay' roars the crowd, 'They surely do!'. If it isn't the loud-mouthed Londoner Derek Jameson host of ITV 's celebrity quiz show *Headliners*. Why should we be mentioning this? Because **Paradigm** are releasing a board-game licensed from the quiz show. Like the TV prog, *Headliners* will take the form of a triva quiz based on the headline stories in the major papers over the past years. Specialist topics such as showbiz, politics and the Royal family can be picked and the winner is the smart-arse who knows it all.

Paradigm's *PSI* (mentioned in TGM **006**) should be available by the time you read this and there are deals being struck up to turn the insulting word association game into a TV programme (hosted by Mr Jameson no doubt).

Wishbone Games have two new titles available – *Wipeout* (nothing to do with surfing) is a triva-cum-card game in which the objective is to collect four playing cards by answering triva questions. Incredibly easy n'est par? Not on your life . Battles with other unscrupulous players, luck of the dice and a whole lot more are intended to make the game more complicated.

The second **Wishbone** title is *The Word Game* a sort of different *Scrabble*. The playing board is divided up into squares and each has a letter. The objective is to move around collecting useful letters and building words. You can intercept the other player's paths around the board and the accompanying action cards can effect your progress. All you have to do now is to put the letters together to make words and get the spelling right.

THE NEIGHBOURS GAME

Crown and Andrews, £11.99, 2-8 players

Panned by the critics, loved by the viewing millions Neighbours,the Aussie soap opera, has now been transformed from a hit daytime TV show into a board game. The theme of the game is to construct a three-scene show using script cards to form sentences. The more players the better: each player is dealt six cards comprising character cards (Shane, Madge, Mrs Mangle etc) extras cards (Bouncer the dog, the drunk . . .) and action cards (. . . and live in sin).

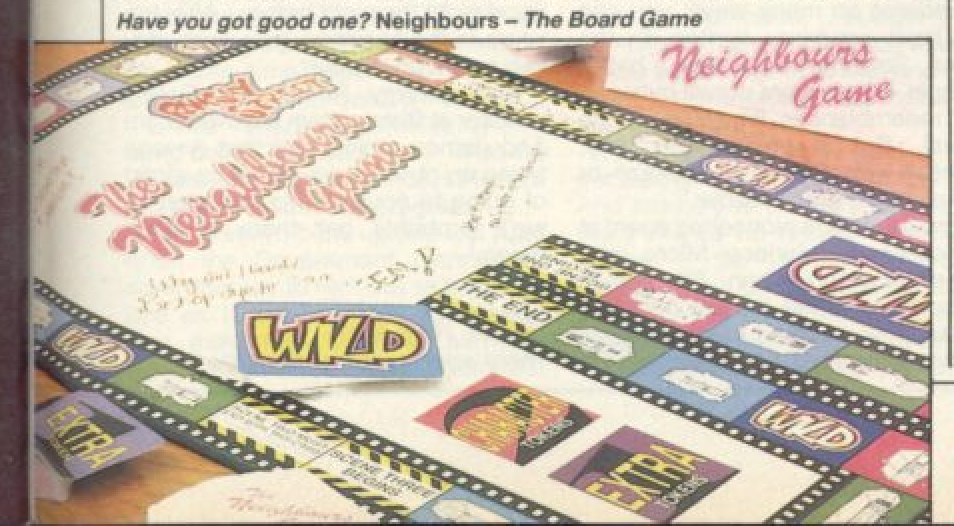
Players take it in turns to place cards on the board to form a story trail. The cards put down must form part of, or a whole, sentence; when a player runs out of cards or can't do anymore to the story with the cards they possess the next player continues. Used cards are replaced from the unused pack. So it goes on with the next player.

To put a bit of luck into the game there are seven Wild segments on the board. These can either make scriptwriting easier or hamper your progress. Points are collected every time a character is added to the storyline (two points) or an extras card is used (1 point). When the board and the story is completed the winner is the player with the most points and has the honour of reading the script. Now, just why did Des undress in front of Mrs Mangle who would mysteriously disappear the following day . . . ?

THE VERDICT

If the board and cards work a really amusing script can be built up - but the fun factor changes every time it's played. *The Neighbours Game* is best played occasionally – we played it four times in a row and found it repetitive, but playing it once, a few days later, it was most enjoyable. Though the packaging and board is slightly tacky the game provides a few laughs if you're a fan of the soap.

Have you got good one? **Neighbours** – *The Board Game*



THERAPY

MB Games, £19.99, 3-6 players

First mentioned in TGM **008** *Therapy* probes your secret thoughts and quizzes your knowledge of that strange creature, the human being. The board has a Trivial Pursuit feel about it and the game is played in a similar way. Players travel around the board on the roll of the dice, covering the six question sections – infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, seniority an cosmos.

Landing on an insight segment (four per question section) results in the player having to answer a question relating to one of the six subjects. Get it right and a peg is won to plug into your therapists' couch, which acts a counter.

Private therapy offices reside at each corner of the board, one per player. Should an opponent land on one they receive a question from the therapy card pile. The therapist ask asks a question (along the lines of: On a scale of one to ten how sensual are you?) and the patient writes down the answer on a piece of paper. The therapist then blurts out his thoughts on the subject and if the two answers match the therapist wins a peg and the player has another turn. The group therapy segment works in a similar way except rather than just the therapist deciding an answer it is discussed between all players.

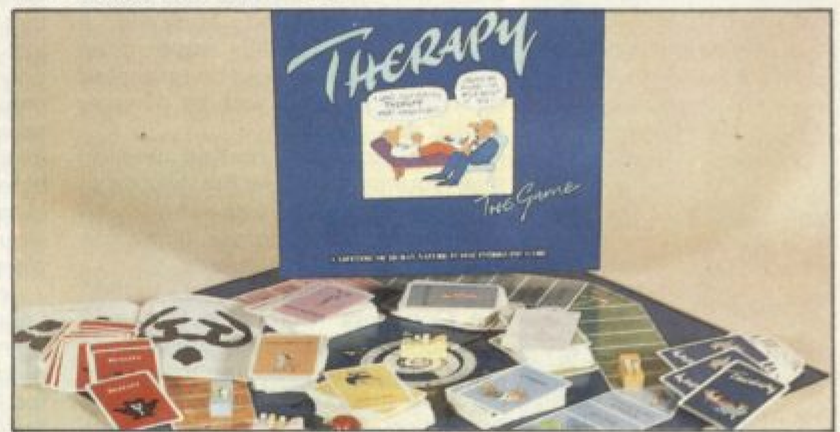
Reality squares pop up twice on the board and these are questions based on the famous inkblot test. The chosen therapist asks the player what an inkblot, picked from a selection of 36, reminds them of and if the players' answer matches the majority answer on the reality card the player wins a peg.

The winner is the player who collects all six pegs, one from each section and passes the finishing post.

THE VERDICT

Therapy is a highly impressive game, well devised and thoroughly enjoyable as you and your opponents, squirm at the probing questions and revealing answers. The package has a good design and the board and question cards are clear. Best enjoyed when all players are feeling relaxed and honest (e. g. after a few jars) *Therapy* is certainly the most entertaining personality game on the market.

Get some, you need it; **Therapy** *from* **MB Games**



Attention software business!

ONE of the solicitors quoted in this article is researching leisure-software law for a degree. He would like to hear the opinions and experiences of software houses and programmers. Write to Solicitor, c/o Barnaby Page, at the Newsfield address on the contents page and your letter will be passed straight on – or phone Barnaby Page on (0584) 5851.

Look, feel, but don't touch – Apple

FOR a firm that prides itself on user-friendliness, Apple Computer has been spoiling for a fight. The real reason, according to some commentators: competition for its famous WIMP (windows, icons, mouse, pull-down menus) environment.

Earlier this year California-based Apple took on one of the biggest American computer firms, Microsoft, who produce the MS-DOS operating system for PCs.

Apple said Microsoft's *Windows 2.0* and *Presentation Manager*, user interfaces developed for IBM's new PS/2 line, were too close to the 'look and feel' of its Mac system.

Microsoft retorted that a 1985 deal with Apple, which allowed them to use the Macintosh *Windows 1.0* interface 'in present and future software programs', took care of that nicely.

Oh no it didn't, said Apple. A spokeswoman at Apple Computer in Cupertino, California told TGM that the two are heading for court on September 23.

Meanwhile, dozens of articles in the PC press have pointed out the awful truth: the core of Apple's precious interface itself came from earlier work at Xerox, dating back to the Sixties.

Copyright killed the video star

IN a shock move this spring, video owners said they wanted to stay

IS THE LAW STILL AN ASS?

Long ago the subject of software piracy attained the position of most talked about magazine subject. Through over-discussion, many hoped the problem would go away, but as Barnaby Page finds out, it's worse than before

Try to imagine 700,000 game cassettes laid end to end, 50 miles long, all the way across London, stretching from seaside Brighton far, far into the fields of Cambridgeshire. That is the size of the piracy problem. The latest estimate from the Federation Against Software Theft (FAST) says that games software houses lose 'certainly into seven figures' every year from illegal copying.

'There's probably not one company who's producing games software who has not suffered a loss from piracy,' FAST Coordinator Bob Hay told TGM.

And a MORI poll revealed in 1986 that a staggering 70% of 14-to-17-year-old gamers admitted copying.

Says Hay: 'We get the hacking groups who distribute, just for the hell of it . . . the pirate groups, who resemble these CB guys, give themselves melodramatic names and hack into programs, alter score notices and swap among themselves.'

That's just in the games world. Piracy of 'serious' software is widespread too, though it often bears more of the hallmarks of organised crime than schoolyard swapping. Look at the size of the whole software business – well over £30 billion, according to a US government study – and you'll see that line of pirated cassettes extending halfway across Europe.

Jumping through loopholes

Amazingly, until 1985 software piracy was not strictly illegal in the UK. Where interpreting the law is concerned there are ten thousand shades of grey, and no area was greyer than software copyright.

But in 1984 Apple Computer, manufacturers of the Macintosh, won a historic victory in an Australian court when the judge decided that source code – uncompiled code in a language like BASIC, rather than machine code – should be protected by copyright laws just as 'literary works' are.

British software houses wanted their country to follow the Australian example, and FAST was set up 'with a view to changing the law'. It now has 150 companies as members.

Westminster soon obliged – in 1985 the Copyright (Computer Software) Amendment Act was passed. In theory, it gave programmers and software producers the same protection that authors and book publishers have: exclusive rights to reproduce and publish it until 50 years after the author's death (the copyright can be left to someone else in a will).

There is no need to register – copyright starts as soon as a program or book is written.

It's a rip-off

But programmers, software houses and their lawyers still found themselves immersed in a sea of legal confusion – not so much in the area of piracy, which is now clearly illegal, but in arguments over games. Often one company will claim that another has ripped off its products, as recently happened when US Gold accused Elite of using ideas from *Roadblasters* in *Overlander*.

Robert Bond, a solicitor for Domark, Elite and Incentive, explains: 'The problem is when two companies bring out similar games at the same time and one knows it's going to lose out to the other. That's when the telexes start flying.

'There are only something like seven different computer games and everything else is bound to be a derivative of those.'

So it's nearly impossible to prove. When does a *Breakout* clone become a *Breakout* rip-off?

An executive at one software house involved in a recent dispute despairs: 'How do you decide? It's 'look and feel'. What is original, that is the question . . . '.

He shows how hard it is to prove that the similarity is intentional, not just a coincidence. 'The computer only scores so many ways, you can only have so many sprites on the screen. *Space Invaders* was a better example – there were actual byte-by-byte resemblances [in some of the clones]. But if you've got, say, *Gauntlet* with ghosts in a maze or worms, that's much harder.'

Jacqui Lyons, a pioneering agent at London-based Marjacq Micro who represents more than 30 games programmers, feels the law could go too far: 'If you want it to stick across the board nothing original would be produced. Look at *Defender* – if every *Defender* was pursued you'd have nothing in the arcades.'



So usually the cases are settled out of court – such 'look and feel' cases are expensive, complicated and not clearly covered by any law. As Bond, who works at Goodger And Auden in Burton on Trent, says: 'It's 50-50 – it depends whether the judge had a good night the night before.' After ten years in the business, he's seen only two cases go to court.

And Jeremy Roper, US Gold's solicitor at Birmingham firm Needham And James, points out that anyone trying an obvious rip-off will be afraid of going to court. 'If it's that blatant, we'll probably get them to back down.'

Just my bill

There was rejoicing when the House



Of Lords proposed new copyright laws last year – computer firms of every size hoped it would finally make things clear.

But they had no such luck with the Copyright, Designs And Patents Bill, now in its final stages in the House Of Lords. Hay suggests that 'because of its high-tech nature, the Bill probably posed a major headache . . . without them being computer experts and at the same time experts in film and experts in music, it was a difficult job'.

Unlike American software law, it won't cover 'look and feel' – what the US rules call the 'sequence, structure and organisation' of a program.

And a storm blew up this last April when the Government planned to allow libraries to rent out software as little as 12 months after its release. Two major US business software firms, Ashton-Tate and Microsoft, said they wouldn't release any more titles in Britain if that became law. A spokesman for the British Computer Society called it 'unworkable'.

They charged that the Government didn't realise how much business software is sold after its first year on the shelves – quite apart from games, which can have at least a two-year life through full-price, budget and compilation releases. Rental libraries would put an end to all that and bring down dozens of software houses, it was predicted.

FAST's Bob Hay and others persuaded the Department Of Trade And Industry to back down and now there will be no renting of software unless the copyright-holder agrees.'They didn't understand the true nature of the industry, but it was satisfactorily resolved' he says.

Perhaps the biggest argument came over blank tapes. For years, record labels have been pushing for a law that would pay them a fee for every blank tape sold – because, they say, most blank tapes are used for illegal copying. Software houses have joined the call for a blank-tape levy too. But despite the Government's early intention to make that law, they abandoned the plan. Hay recalls: 'The only little acrimony was over the blank-tape levy.'

Exploitation?

For programmers, the squabbling software houses are all very well – but what they want is protection for their own work. In the early days of games, there were frequent tales of programmers being paid a pittance for bestsellers. Jon Ritman (*Head Over Heels*, *Matchday*) got just £150 for his first hit, *Namtir Raiders*, in the early Eighties.

He recently recalled that 'most programmers are taken for a ride from the start'.

Jacqui Lyons makes sure her clients' contracts protect them from that, but there's still a legal difficulty – like many in software law, it arises from the fact that you can produce more or less the same game from two completely different sets of code.

She explains the distinction. When someone is signed up to produce a game,'algorithmic copyright remains with the programmer, but the actual game's copyright remains with the publisher.' Legally, the programmer simply gives the software house the right to publish their code 'over a limited period'.

But 'we have no rights in the game construction or gameplay because they are created by the software house'.

Freelance programmers themselves can also thrust software houses into trouble. Bond observes that many 'are damn good at programming but have no business sense. They don't see the impropriety of taking ideas from one company to another. And then people shoot first and ask questions later.'

Patience bending

Many software firms would like patents for their products. It's easier to win a patent case against someone you think has ripped off your product, because they have to prove they *haven't* – whereas in copyright cases you have to show they *have*.

And, says Bond, patents are 'regarded with a damn sight more credence than copyright – it's power to your elbow'.

But the patents law specifically says that computer programs are not patentable. So programmers and software houses are left, everyone says, forgotten by the law. FAST continue to pursue the pirates across those miles of illegal copies – and though they had a software pirate sent to prison for the first time in January, legal experts agree that a copyright law conceived in 1956 misses out many important aspects of new technology.

Says Bond: 'I don't think the 1985 Act achieved anything. Neither is the new Bill going to achieve anything either.'

illegal. At least, that was the message that came from newspapers and the Labour benches when the Government tried to allow home taping.

The Government put a clause in the new Copyright, Designs And Patents Bill that said TV shows could be legally taped – provided the tapes were erased after 28 days.

Labour called it 'bizarre'. Reporters seemed to think that it was a move to make video-taping *illegal*.

Eventually, in July the Government dropped its plan. And they were only trying to help us . . .

Around the world in 80 clauses

COPYRIGHT, soppy right? Though about 100 of the world's leading nations belong to international copyright agreements, privately governments believe that too much protection is a bad thing.

In some Third World countries, minimal software copyright laws were until recently a boon to black-market trade – in 1985, for instance, American software house Lotus found that copies of its world-famous accounting program *1-2-3* sold for a mere fiftieth of their US price in Singapore.

My program right or wrong?

Programmers don't just want money – they want their names to go out on decent games. And it seems that after 40 years of waiting British authors and programmers will get the so-called 'moral rights' that they should have had after a Brussels treaty in 1948.

Moral rights, which other countries have had for years, entitle authors to be named on their creations, and to stop them being published if there are any 'unjustified modifications'. That's the way the new Copyright, Designs And Patents Bill phrases it.

Programmers' agent Jacqui Lyons explains how it applies to conversions: the software house 'must come back to the programmer as to whether it's worth doing'.

FANTASY GAMES

CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB

A Boardgame For 1-4 Players

Games Workshop, £14.95

Curse of the Mummy's Tomb is Games Workshop's latest boardgame, featuring a slot together 3D board representing the interior of the Pyramid of Khonsu which the players must brave to recover the legendary Elixir of Life. Immortality is the reward for the victor – for the loser, death awaits in the form of poison darts, descending coils, mantraps, giant scorpions, vipers and of course the undead Mummy itself!

Players of GW's previous boardgame *DungeonQuest* will not be surprised to find full-sized metal miniature playing pieces for the four players and the dreaded Mummy, together with brief and (almost always) clear booklets telling you how to play and describing the various denizens of the tomb in occasionally lurid prose. You'll also find full-colour playing cards, the board and lots and lots of those funny little blue cones to use as counters.

The game can be played solo or by up to four players, taking on the roles of such brave adventurers as the San Fransisco private eye Marlow Hammett and the world-famous Professor Nayland Cushing. Play of the game is a fair bit more sophisticated than that of *DungeonQuest*, and thankfully there's scope for players to interact with each other. *DungeonQuest* was basically a solo game for 1-4 players!



Each player receives a number of cards which can have various functions, either featuring monsters, traps or treasures that may be found within the pyramid or are Movement Cards which allow a player to progress through the pyramid. In a given turn a player may either swap some or all of their cards for Tana Leaves – counters that can be used to replenish lost lives or bid for control of the Mummy, or move his or her piece by trading in the appropriate Move card. But then the other players may add cards on their own to move the piece further, possibly in exactly the wrong direction! Depending on the final resting place of the piece, the other players may lay further cards to confront the hapless adventurer with monsters, traps or perhaps treasures. These are dealth with using a system of characteristic scores – each adventurer has a score for Cunning, Egyptology, Fortune and the like and must make a dice roll based on that score to avoid a monster or trap. Failure can result in the loss of a life or some other inconvenience. Players then replenish their stock of cards and play moves round.

Added danger is provided by the Mummy, the most fearsome denizen of the pyramid, who is moved by an entertaining bidding system. The player who bids the greatest number of Tana leaves gets to move the monster towards his or her preferred victim.

In general I enjoyed *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* .It's an entertaining game with plenty of possible events. However, I did find the end of the game a little unsatisfactory . Once a player reaches the Chamber of Osiris where the elixir is found they must succeed in a number of dice rolls which may take several turns to complete and achieve victory, but there is very little the other players can do to hinder this process except hope to reach the chamber themselves and complete their dice rolls first.

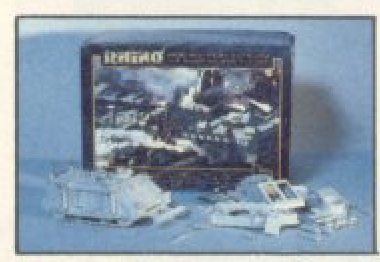
Another problem is that the four-player game can go on for a very long time. With three players able to play movement and trap cards to hinder the fourth, play can continue for ages with no one making any real progress. You're going to need that Elixir of Life by the time you get to it! The game probably works best with three or perhaps two players.

Overall, an attractive and fun game, though I'm not sure about its long-term appeal. Once you've seen one Chamber of Osiris you've seen 'em all!



IN BRIEF

I don't normally feature miniatures for role-playing and wargames, principally because the range carried by most games shops these days is so large that avid collectors of miniatures probably have the latest releases long before they would get a chance to read this column. But the press release for this set of three 1/48 scale plastic Rhinos caught my eye. After praising to the skies Citadel's 'newfound skills with plastic' and the 'massive scope for imaginative conversions' the writer had the decency to end on a mildly sarcastic note: 'I expect you will have fainted with sheer delight by now'. When I regained conciousness I noted that the Rhinos of the title are in fact armoured assault vehicles for your *Warhammer 40,000* Space Marines and Imperial Army .The three kits are indentical but the box includes a full-colour painting chart, transfers and suggestions for customising your models, and will set you back £9.99.



The Rhino Armoured Assault Vehicle



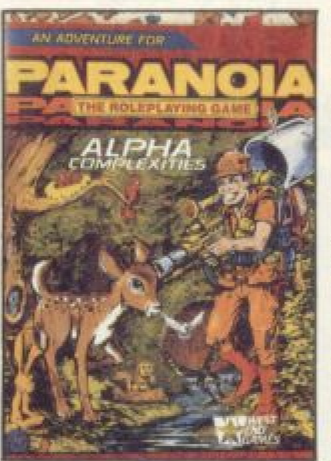
The bounty hunters

Tatooine Manhunt is the latest release from West End for the wonderful *Star Wars* roleplaying game (regular readers may have twigged by now that I'm something of a fan). Unlike the *Star Wars Campaign Pack* which consisted of adventure outlines, this pack has a single full length adventure with scope for anything from one to four sessions' play, depending on how many distractions of his or her own the referee wants to work with.

As the title suggests the action takes place on the desert planet featured in the original movie, and features a desperate quest for the ageing hero Adar Tallon,who is in hiding somewhere in the desert . The players must find him, persuade him to join the Rebel Alliance and escape before the Imperials arrive in force.

As you'd expect from West End the 32 page adventure booklet is beautifully produced, and there's also a full-colour A2 size map featuring the town of Mos Eisley on one side, and on the other the infamous Mos Eisley Cantina – drawn from the original set plans for the movie . There is also a Star Warriors scenario to allow players with those rules to fight out the climatic dogfight in breathtaking detail, plus a copy of amendments to the rules which were introduced in the Campaign Pack.

A well-written adventure with the advantage of a setting familiar to anyone who's seen the first *Star Wars* movie The price is £5.95.



The Mummy's Tomb RPG

And finally another West End offering : *Alpha Complexities*, is an adventure for the intensely wacky *Paranoia* RPG. The style of presentation has changed slightly from previous *Paranoia* scenarios, with game statistics for NPCs and the like included in a separate reference section.

As ever in *Paranoia* adventures the story is hilarious to read and terrifying to play, with such lethal adversaries as I want-U-DED, the Vampire Bot, the appallingly powerful Warbot Mark IV, the nutty Computer itself and last but by no means least, your fellow player characters.

The adventure starts well with a briefing that's uncompromising even by *Paranoia* standards:'As fatalities are expected to be overwhelming, all clones in each family will report to facilitate rapid reinforcement'. From there on life (and of course death) for the Troubleshooters follows a huge number of terrifying twists culminating in a climactic battle that owes quite a lot of a certain movie featured in one of West End's other games . . .

NEW LOW PRICE ST!

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ATARI 1040ST-F - NEW PRICE

We are pleased to announce a new reduced price point on the 1040ST-F which is now available for only £499 (inc VAT). The 1040 is a powerful computer with 1Mb of RAM and also includes a built-in 1Mb double sided 3½" disk drive. The 1040 has been designed for use on business and professional applications most of which require a high resolution monochrome or colour monitor. It does not therefore have an RF modulator for use with a domestic TV set. Modulators can be fitted for £49 (inc VAT).

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MEGA ST's NOW IN STOCK

For the user who requires even more RAM than the 520 or 1040 ST's offer, the new MEGA ST computers are now available. There are two MEGA ST's, one with 2Mb of RAM and the other with a massive 4Mb. Both new computers are fully compatible with existing ST's and run currently available ST software. The MEGA ST's are styled as an expandable Central Processing Unit with open architecture and a detachable keyboard. They are supplied with GEM, a free mouse controller and all extras as with the 520 or 1040. Prices are as follows:

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ATARI ST

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Address: ....

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Do you already own a computer
If so, which one do you own? ....

SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF SLAUGHTERVILLE MANOR AND GET SCARED STIFF!

A ghostly weekend in York is to be won; spooky goings on courtesy of LANKHOR



TOP adventure this month, according to Rob Steel, is **Lankhor**'s *Mortville Manor*, a famous French adventure which has you tracking clues leading to the solution of a murder. Any aspiring dectectives should be well into this as the player enters the adventure without any idea of what has happened or what could happen through the game.

Mortville Manor is available for both the Amiga and Atari ST and features wonderful graphics which rather than just being decorative provide clues as you wander around the manor's many rooms. There's no text input, the game is totally mouse controlled with options taken from extensive and easy to use pull down menus. Add to that the continual speech and magnificent theme tune and you have one of most original detective adventures. Rob Steel awards it 81% in this months **Getting Adventurous**.

All these spooky goings on in the Manor have lead Lankhor to offer a mysterious and down right spooky prize in this *Mortville Manor* competition. To be in with a chance you're going to have to solve a murder mystery of your own. Detailed below are the events leading up to a murder in the manor across the road from Mortville: Slaughterville Manor.

Pouting Josephine has been done to death, but by who? If you can narrow down all the possibilities and come up with a murderer you could win the top prize which is a mysterious two day stay in the haunted city of York. The prize is on offer to you and your family (maximum of three other people). You'll all be sent up to York to stay in Grasmead House, rumoured to be the most haunted place in York and we're going to insist that you stay there *all night*!

As if this wasn't enough, you and your guests will be taken on a night time tour of Yorks' most haunted places. The Ghost Tour of York was recently experienced by some chums of TGM who haven't been quite the same since. On top of all that we're giving away 25 copies of *Mortville Manor* to the runners up

Thinking caps on and solve that mystery. . . .

THE MYSTERY OF SLAUGHTERVILLE MANOR

It is the morning after a stormy night and a scream sounds through the dark corridors and gloomy hallways of Slaughterville Manor. It comes from terrified Faith Ure Dusture, the maid, who has just discovered the body of Josephine, lady of the manor. Her mistress is lying stone dead before her. There is no sign of blood or of a violent attack but she's dead sure enough; lying there on the cold stone slabs of the kitchen floor with her silk dressing gown grubby with dust, croissant crumbs and spilt milk.

Jean Dinshed, the manor's gardener, potters about on the lawn eating a croissant and one of two left overs from the day before. Unaware of the goings on he returns to the conservatory and opens the cupboard where the plant foods and seeds are kept. He picks up the weed killer, and, finding that the cork is a bit loose, pushes it tighter into the bottle neck. He throws it into the barrow along with the trowel, hoe and grass seed. He then wheels the whole lot out of the conservatory stopping only briefly to bid 'bon matin' to the butler who is carring a case as he makes his way towards the drive.

Meanwhile back inside the manor Faith is joined by Francois De Gateaux, the chef, who enters the room as if returning to his natural habitat, carring a large syringe-type instrument.

Faith screams. 'Vot zee 'ell iz going on?' says a startled Francois. 'Beut, monsieur', exclaims Faith, 'It's Lady Josephine, she's been killed!'. 'Zis is terrible' says Francois fiddling with the syringe. 'Vot is zat thing?' questions Faith. 'Ahm, it iz vot I use to put zee jam in zee doughnuts,' Francios replies, 'I 'ave, er, jest finished todays batch'.

Automatically Josephine goes to take the syringe to add to the washing up but Francois exclaims, 'How could you think about washing when out lady is lying dead on ze floor?'

Faith begins to cry as Francois tells her he will fetch the police.

FIN

Vot 'as, ahem, sorry . . . What has been happening in the Manor? It won't take a genius to piece together the answers, so this should be perfect for you lot. Provide us with the correct, or as near-as-dammit answers for the following questions and you could be on your way to winning the ghostly holiday. Send your completed conclusions to: **YES, TONIGHT JOSEPHINE COMP, THE GAMES MACHINE,** *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. All solutions must be sent by September 15 and follow the rules as detailed in the masthead, or you just might end up like Josephine, ze poor leetill cabbage.*

THE MURDERER WAS:
(tick one)

- ☐ ***Faith Ure Dusture***
- ☐ ***Francois De Gateaux***
- ☐ ***The Butler***
- ☐ ***Jean Dinshed***

HOW WAS JOESPHINE KILLED? ....

....

Name: ....

Address: ....

....

Postcode: ....

COMPUTER OWNED ....



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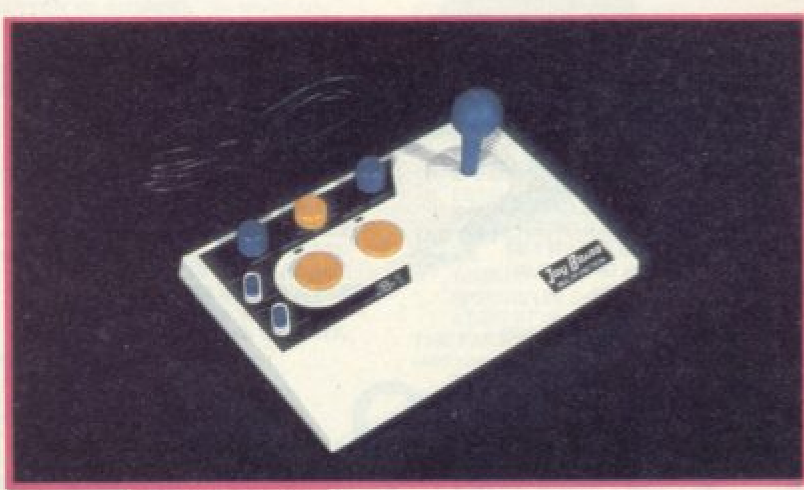
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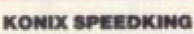


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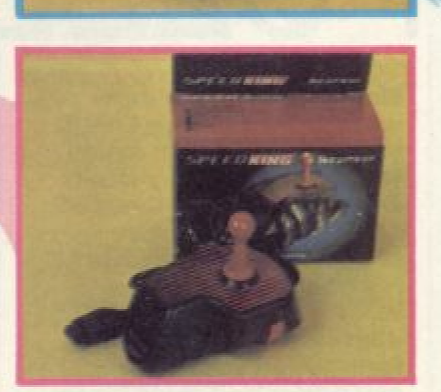


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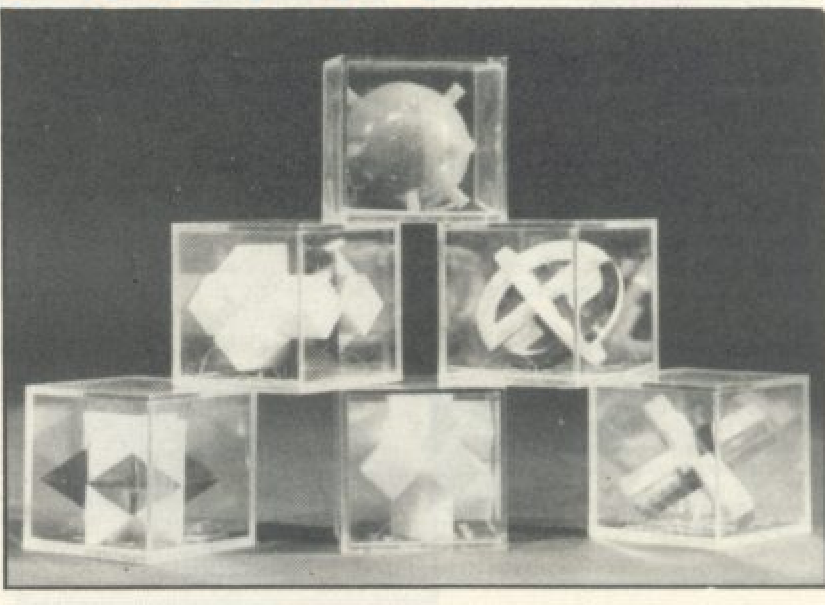


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MUSIC, ARCHIE PLEASE. . .

Jon Bates has been racking his brains trying to find a British computer that has anything like a half-decent sound chip. He thought he couldn't find one, until he discovered the Archimedes – Arcorn's 32-bit wonder BBC micro, coupled with the music package Soundsynth

Somebody certainly did their homework when commissioning the hardware gubbins for the Archimedes. It has on-board a special purpose chip whose sole *raison d'etre* is to allow up to eight independent sound or music outputs to occur simultaneously. It will also put these outputs anywhere in a stereo image, that is place it between your left and right speakers, or ears if you wear headphones.

The hardware is in essence a fast sampler that can process the streams of digital information at a rate preset by the program. It defaults to a sampling rate of 20KHz but it can be convinced to sample up to 32KHz. If that is all number crunching jibberish then all you need to know is that that is the sample rates that all professional samplers use.

All the filtering and mixing for the outputs is achieved on the main current board. The other big point about the sound chip is that it can cope with data thrown at it that is not actually sampled sound but rather digital wave tables – in short a digital synthesizer. The overall aim is to use the very high speed of the Archimedes to generate or process wave tables, harmonics, shape the sound and generally do all the things that a synth can do.

The actual hardware is a fairly docile beast and it's the power and speed of the processor that gives the muscle to be able to do whatever the software will allow it. In theory this means that super software could be developed to turn the Archimedes into a minature stand-alone music-creating system with many of the attributes of the Fairlight system.

Like all complex machines, the work required to develop the software will not be achieved in a short time. The bigger the market, the more sophisticated the software as there is less risk involved in laying out money in development. There is a music program in the form of a simple sequencer package that comes on the 'welcome' disk. It has a choice of instruments and can play back tunes from either a stave or from the displayed keyboard. However the first fruits of dedicated music software development are now available and are reviewed for your edification in this article by yours truly.

"Somebody did their homework when commissioning the hardware gubbins for the Archimedes."

My only minor niggle with Acorn is that by not putting MIDI ports on board (a very low cost modification) it means that every music software company could develop its own individual interface and thus skewer the compatibility factor that MIDI is supposed to give you. This happened with the Spectrum and Commodore 64 markets and only now are homegrown conversion programs for different interfaces and software available. With MIDI built in, all software is interchangeable – you don't have to choose one make of software.

So to sum up. The music of the Archie is a very high powered open plan that is flexible enough to adapt to virtually any musical function now achieved by other machines but at a far faster rate and hence with far greater opportunities. Watch this space for reviews.

Educating Archie

Almost twelve months ago I stood before a stall at the British Music Fair and saw a preview of the first software for the Archimedes. Owners of other micros will be familiar with the company, EMR, who have been in the micro/MIDI market virtually since its inception. Founder and director Mike Beecher has a wonderous line in patter that has to be heard, and a reasonable sized crowd were hanging on to

every line of the demonstration as it unfolded.

Mike was pretty happy that his company had been selected by Acornsoftware for the Archie and to prove the point he had a screen display of the intended software.

As you might imagine, the software for a complex and fast machine such as Archie is not built in a day, a far cry from the garage-produced software of yesteryear knocked up by third formers with time on their hands. Thus it is that we have the first issue of music software for the Archimedes on THE GAMES MACHINE's test bench.

Rather than using a specific sound chip which could restrict the sound quality, Acorn have plumped for a fast and accurate sound sampler and converter that leaves the rest of the business to the speed of the processor to whiz through the software routines and deliver the goods. This being the case, a long gestation period is necessary for any worthwhile programs to surface. The Archimedes is equipped with two sources of sound output. You can hear it through the monitor speaker, which is a bit like hooking a CD player up to a telephone, or you can use the stereo output, which consists of a mini-jack output like that on a personal stereo, to hook it through your hi-fi, or whatever, to gain the maximum benefit of the sonic qualities of the sound. Time to raid the local electrical store for a few converter leads methinks.

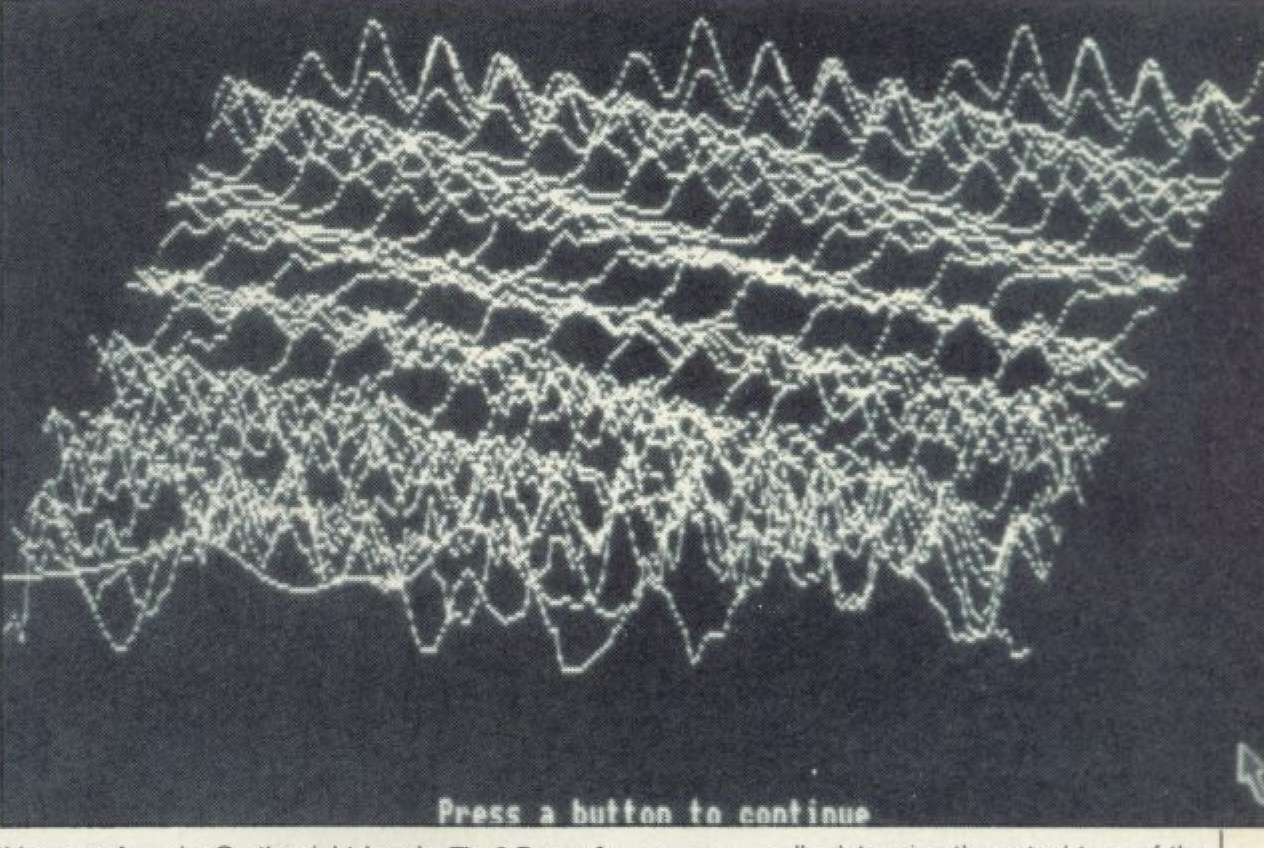
First up is *Soundsynth* which forms part of EMR's total system, the *Arpeggio Music System*. The program is designed purely for creating sound within the Archimedes itself, but from the loading screen one gets the idea that EMR are about to develop a host of music programs – an incredible 17 of them to be precise, although the files are there in name only at present.

Hand-drawn

The sounds can be drawn by hand, using the mouse, created from harmonics, created from mathematical equations or randomly constructed. You could shell out a few more coppers and purchase an 8-bit linear sound sampler, the A448 Audio Sound Sampler, from EMR which happily is compatible for this program but it needs a back plate from Acorn for it to plug in to. You can then play around with the sound you have sampled. All sounds having been doctored and set up to your satisfaction they can then be downloaded into a Waveform Filing System that is supplied on the program disk.

The program under scrutiny is a stand-alone program that creates sounds and files them away. Depending on the available memory space, up to 32 sounds may be stored in the system. Sounds are constructed by creating a group of waves; separate waveforms within a numbered range of 1 to 512. More on this later. On entering the program you are given 32 waves to work with although of course you create an infinite number of your own.

After the rather decorative loading screen we get down to the main working screen. In the upper left-hand portion of the screen is the wave display. Initially it is a bit confusing because one is not really sure just exactly what this wave form is. On the right-hand side of the screen is a status list of what wave is on display and all the things to do with it. Underneath the upper display are the panels that give access to the functions of the program – that is the modification or creation of a sound, hit them with the mouse and the function commands are revealed. I would have liked to have seen some sort of calibration or information displayed on the axis of the displayed wave forms as to what exactly the wave form was. It was not clear whether it was time left to right, harmonic content, volume, or whatever. Later on when you are sorting out the looping facilities this becomes reasonably crucial.



The 3-D waveform screen allows for those fine adjustments

Mixing harmonics

Things became much clearer when I hit the **SHOW** button on screen. This throws up a 3-D picture of the sounds – a soundscape if you will, which displays all the waveforms that go to create the sound. In other words a sound, as far as this program is concerned, is a selection of variable harmonics that go away from you in segments. Surprisingly enough, given the speed and resolution of the Archimedes, it could not be fitted onto one screen and again it would have benefitted from some labelling on the axis of the display. All the waveforms displayed can be printed in hard copy on any Epsom-compatible printer. Rumour has it that a laser printer driver is due soon.

There are five ways of making up a single waveform: mix up to 16 harmonics together, use the mouse to draw the waveform, alter any waveform with a mathematical equation, by selecting a random icon random waveforms are created usually creating wind and water effects known as white noise.

If a sampler is fitted you can display and edit the sampled sound.

Mixing the harmonics together lets you draw up to 16 harmonics. Harmonic synthesis is where the fundamentals of any pitch has additional harmonics added to it. The relative volume of the harmonics will eventually determine the actual tone of the final sound. It's a bit like the pipes on a church organ, where to create various tones the organist adds different stops, which is in effect adding small or large pipes to the sound. Some harmonics are not just the fundamental note but are in fact pitches in sympathy with the root. All it really means is that this is the way you alter the tones. Another way of looking at it would be to think of a graphic equaliser which boosts or cuts certain frequencies. Now the difference is of course that a graphic has signal fed into it whereas a harmonic addictive synthesis function is creating the frequencies from scratch.

"Super software could turn the Archimedes into a minature music-creating system with many of the attributes of the Fairlight system"

The aforementioned harmonic synthesis flicks up a series of bar graphs rising from the bottom of the screen; just aim the mouse at the harmonic you want and press to increase its volume. The harmonics are numbered 1 to 16, which to me is a bit impersonal and perhaps it could have shown the harmonics in terms of organ pipe footage shown as well, or contained some explanation as to what the harmonics are. If you know your acoustic physics you will understand what is known as the harmonic series, but for the rest of us a little hand-holding would help.

Wave surfing

Drawing your own waveforms creates a single wave. This is achieved with the mouse and you can outline the basic shape and then zoom in to etch the fine details. The number of the wave form you are working on is displayed in the top right hand corner of the screen. Using a mathematical equation creates nervous palpitations. To one like me who has just progressed to using a calculator for addition, this looks like nuclear physics. However it does occur to me that with a preset formula you could create a form of FM synthesis. This is certainly worth some R and D for future applications.

The editing features are going to have to be good, think I. I'm not disappointed. I have always advocated visual display as a must for any sound-creating program. That and the means



to move the graphic representation around. With *Soundsynth* you get a wide choice of editing options which can be represented graphically on-screen.

You can: insert one or more blank waves between your selected waves, overlay one complete sound on top of another, any selected group of waves can be set to echo with the volume of the source and echo set independently using the mouse, read a group of waves backwards and play sounds or speech in reverse, copy any part of the waveform to another position, delete any part of the waveform (if you don't want to be quite so drastic then a 'wipe' function reduces a specified wave area to zero volume), slapback in a single repeat echo and finally loop: the all important function of any waveform editor sets the sustain area which should repeat whilst the key is held down.

I would have liked to have seen a search for compatible sections of the sound when looking for looping. Many samplers have this and it saves a lot of messing about have an auto-loop-point feature. However I found that by using INTERPOLATE I could smooth over most gliches in the sound. Looping can be set to continue or not on key release. The delay and echo settings are most fastidious, going the six decimal points in fractions of a second to get the length of delay you want. Being lazy I was looking for something to hit with the mouse rather than actually having to enter some real data. In addition, you can set the master volume, turn the monitor sound off and adjust the master pitch. A help box is set at the bottom of the screen which is a good thing although if it annoys you it can be disabled.

All these are very well thought out and useful functions, particularly when you have created by one means or another a single wave form and you wish to get a sound from it.

Like a Fairlight

Editing itself is fairly easy. In fact you are quite spoilt for choice. Most of the headings are hopefully self evident and when selected you have to choose at what point, that is what waveform number, in the sound you want to start you edit. This could be loop, echo, reverse etc. You then drag the numbers across in a small box situated just underneath the waveform box. Select the end point in a similar manner and away you go. It has some pretty advanced features in the form of 9APPEND which puts two sets of wave forms pulled off the sound file one after another so the two sounds occur sequentially. OVERLAY is one sound layered on top of another and my favourite was INTERPOLATE. As mentioned before, this smoothed out the passage from one sound waveform to another, even to the point of drawing your own two wave forms with the mouse and then getting the program to design the waveforms in between the two points.

The harmonics editing menu

This is almost an exact replica of the Fairlight method of sound creation, the only difference being that the Fairlight uses 3-D display to redraw the waveforms in front of you and here you have to flip to the 3-D screen. Still the Fairlight costs nearly 80 times as much, so some things are worth a small sacrifice.

At any time you can play the sound over a range of four octaves from the QWERTY keys by hitting the HEAR command. The keys that play the sounds are listed on screen. You can transpose the pitch of the basic note and also set the number of repeats each sound will make. As this is a sound creating and not a performance program the key action is good enough for reference. I found the HEAR option very effective but it would have been nice to use it for reference without having to hit the screen button and flip the screen. Why not have a fast access on a function key as when you are editing it is a bit tedious to flip screens to and fro?

A good start

The quality of the sounds was superb. I can honestly say that out of all the new micros which have advanced sound capabilities this was the by far the cleanest and most faithful reproduction. Even if I didn't like the original samples that came with the program the quality puts it head and several stretched necks above the competition. One thing I couldn't work out was how many notes you could play simultaneously.

Being one of the first editions of the software, the instruction manual I had was only a provisional one and I would think that the one that you would get will have a little more step-by-step instructions with examples especially as most people who purchase it may be unfamiliar with the ins and outs of sound synthesis in this manner. I definitely had problems in distinguishing between wave, waveform and soundwave as these terms were not clear.

Soundsynth is what it says, a sound creator and not a performance program. As such it forms part of the *Arpeggio* suite of music programs for the Archie. Sounds created by this program can be transferred to disk via the Waveform Filing System (WFS) and reloaded into the Welcome package, EMR Archimedes programs or even into your own games. I suppose if you were super smart you could crack existing games and substitute or add your own sounds: a migraine generator if ever I heard of one.

Soundsynth is a good start for a system that when fully developed will be an enormous one. Other pieces of software scheduled for release by EMR between now and Christmas are a 24-track sequencer with built-in SMPTE, a simple note-painting sequencer, and add-on program for Yamaha multikeyboards and a score writer. They are also hard at work developing a program for digitising a visual score and then transmuting it into real sounds. These will go through THE GAMES MACHINE hoop when we get them. Also available is a rather complex and professional MIDI multitasking box called *Syntec*, which will form part of an upmarket package. More on this too at a later stage.

Next month we return back to the homely world of the 16-bit Atari ST and Amiga.

"Of all the new micros which have advanced sound capabilities this was the by far the cleanest and most faithful reproduction"

***Soundsynth* will set you back £49.95. The additional Creation sound files which you can load into the Acorn Welcome pack cost £19.95. The sampler is £39.90. More information can be had by contacting: EMR, *14 Mount Close, Wickford, Essex SS11 8HG*, ☎ 0702 335747**

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CHIBA CIT

Just as BLADE RUNNER towers over cinematic SF, so the fiction of William Gibson dominates the landscape of print cyberpunk. Stuart Wynne takes a look at Gibson's celebrated work, along with the 'competition'

Stories and tales have been with us probably since the invention of language, but the novel itself is a comparatively recent invention by comparison with theatre, dance or art. Published in 1740, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* is widely recognised as being the first true novel.

SF itself is claimed, by experts such as Brian Aldiss and Isaac Asimov, to begin with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Published in 1818, her tale of how a scientist created his own nemesis is said to be the first to deal with the profound changes the then relatively new discipline of science could bring. Yet subsequent novels by people like Jules Verne and HG Wells were not thought to be some new genre, but rather relatives of such surreal stories as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Only in the early 20th century did the term acquire meaning as book publishers and magazine editors felt the need to develop a label by which to sell products of a similarly fantastic nature to a mass audience. Thus an unknown author could benefit from Verne's fame by being called an SF writer. Categorisation has helped a large market grow up for SF, but the negative side is its tendency to be excluded from 'serious' literature as if it were all written by formula.

Similarly a lot of fiction which might reterospectively be called cyberpunk was written before the term was invented. Only in the early Eighties, when William Gibson's distinctive vision of the future was winning numerous awards and sales, did a label make sense. John Varley's *Overdrawn At The Memory Bank*, for example, is a short story about a man whose consciousness is trapped in an artificial world created by a computer. Published in 1976, it seems a part of the subgenre only with hindsight. Other fiction, such as Michael Swanwick's *Vacuum Flowers*, seems set a little beyond cyberpunk's typical near-future world, but the publisher features a critique calling it 'quintessentially cyberpunk' and that can't but help sales.

"The author who created cyberpunk is, of course, William Gibson"

Uneasy Rider

Possibly the strongest precursor of cyberpunk is to be found in the work of John Brunner, who has often dealt with a near-future world dominated by large corporations. *The Jagged Orbit* (1969), for example, is set in 2014 when the Gottschalk weaponry combine has become a dominant world power. In rather more sophisticated fashion than *Max Headroom*, this award winning novel features a kind of TV news presenter as the key character in a nightmarish dystopia partially created by Gottschalk to cause paranoia – and ever higher security sales. A slightly more recent Brunner work – *The Shockwave Rider* – has just been reprinted by Methuen and features an acknowledgement by the author thanking Alvin Toffler for helping inspire the book. Toffler did this with the non-fiction study *Future Shock* which is a natural companion to that cyberpunk bible *The Third Wave*.

As with *The Jagged Orbit*, Brunner's 1975 novel has a powerful military-industrial complex dominating American society. The signing of a world disarmament treaty in 1989 has led only to a switch of weapons, with the search for genetically engineered super-intelligent humans now distorting society much as the production of massive stockpiles of weapons had done previously. Memories play an important part in the book, firstly those of Nick Haflinger, whose recollections form the first two-thirds of the novel as they're rifled through by an interrogation officer.

Secondly there's the memories of transactions and surveillance stored in the very cyberpunkish electronic network which contains records on nearly everyone. A major part of the plot is Haflinger's ability to change identities by manipulating this network, and later his threat to destroy it via a 'tapeworm' program indistinguishable from the viral threat faced by Amigas and heavily featured in cyberpunk.

Unlike cyberpunk, however, the book is distinctly anti-technology, fearing, for example, that the huge electronic information network will allow an elite few immense advantages by having access to vitally important data which others are barred from. Another fear is the

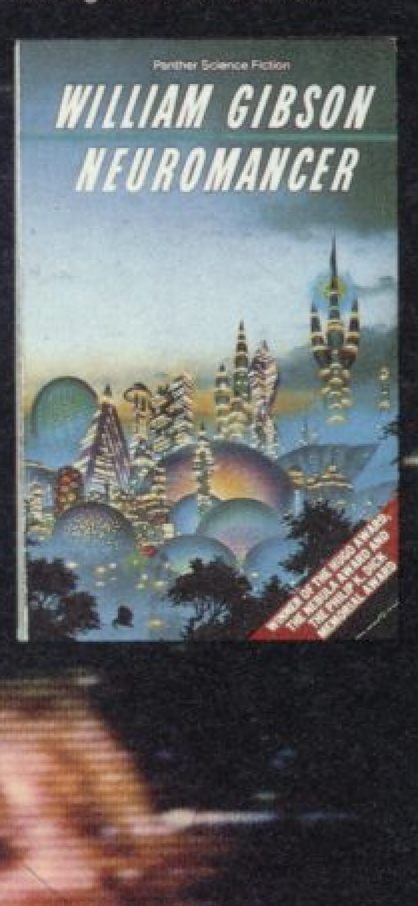
Y BLUES

homogenisation of society with cultural differences minimised by MacDonald's like global conformity and scientifically planned 'ideal' lifestyles.

A complex and interesting novel, it's ironic that *The Shockwave Rider* is itself distinctly mechanistic and almost inhuman. As with classical and rather outmoded SF, the central concerns are the ideas, with frequent diversions to examine issues such as why 21st century government isn't effective – people are moving so much their representatives rarely represent them for long. Further the central character is almost a stereotypical boffin; the only man who can fight the conspiracy is a former co-conspirator who has clearly benefitted from all its efforts to raise intelligence. Toward the latter part of the book several prototype Utopias are rather self-consciously examined and dissected. The best of these is populated almost entirely by social scientists. (Honest.) Despite the lack of emotional involvement, however, Brunner's books are generally very stimulating to read and these two are rarely dull.

Neuromantic

The author who created cyberpunk is, of course, William Gibson. After the publication of his first short story in 1976, Gibson went on to become a leading short story writer for *Omni* magazine culminating in his award winning novel *Neuromancer*.



Almost invariably Gibson's heroes or heroines are low-life hustlers with more street smarts than any kind of academic qualifications. Gibson began writing while attending university after a Vietnam draft-dodging emigration to Canada. Surprisingly he himself is far from a technological buff and cites his source material as a fusion of drug culture and the subculture he observed in the arcades. *Neuromancer* was written not on a wordprocessor, but an old typewriter and even features its hero hacker asking for a modem while interfaced with the computers through a skull socket. At the time, Gibson admits, he had no idea a modem was simply a means by which a telephone could link two computers and merely liked the sound of the word.

To some, such as *Q* magazine, this lack of comprehensive knowledge suggests 'incessant bullshit' and Gibson has himself admitted, in a 1987 *Knave* interview, that his fiction seemed to him rather like 'bullshitting on an undergraduate paper'. Yet because the future obviously hasn't arrived yet, SF by its nature cannot be cut and dried.

Part of the problem with a great deal of serious SF is that whenever anything happens a paragraph or so is wasted explaining why it really could happen. The result is a lumbering plot and a future-world that never seems anything more than contrived. Gibson's writing, by comparison, is like a brilliant scam artist at work, off-handedly mentioning SF concepts without pausing to let you doubt them. Where Gibson does have to explain something, the disruption to plot and ambience is minimal. The 'consensual hallucination' of cyberspace, for example, is explained by the central character noting a child's educational show in a moment of almost-nostalgia before flicking channels. The real genius of it, however, is that the references do seem so very realistic. Unlike Swanwick, for example, the SF technology always seems coherently yoked into a single, believable future world.

Tailor-worship

On top of this environment Gibson runs some tightly-plotted stories with strong non-SF appeal. *Neuromancer*'s hero – Casey – begins the novel suicidal, barred from his former career as a cyberspace hacker by special drugs. A return to the *Tron*-styled world of electronic espionage is offered, but only at the price of being in the thrall of a mysterious ex-soldier. The task set him he feels dubious of, but has little choice given his desire to keep accessing cyberspace. While Case's personality is the most fully realised yet developed by Gibson, lesser characters are no less impressive. Typical of Gibson's style is this brief sketch:

Julius Deane was one hundred and thirty-five years old . . . His primary hedge against ageing was a yearly pilgrimage to Tokyo, where genetic surgeons reset the code of his DNA, a procedure unavailable in Chiba. Then he'd fly to Hongkong and order the year's suits and shirts. Sexless and inhumanly patient, his primary gratification seemed to lie in his devotion to tailor-worship.

Where a conventional SF author might be content with detailing the anti-ageing technology and graft on a superficial character, Gibson almost always manages to integrate the SF elements and appropriate, interesting characterisation. The principal 'muscle' in

TRILLION BYTE TRIPS

THIS month's feature concludes the three-part series on cyberpunk as a subgenre, but you haven't quite got rid of me yet. Starting next month, I will be writing a column devoted to books – of a particular sort.

As a completely unbiased and fair-minded member of the public, I'd like to say novels are potentially the greatest entertainment bar only mind-to-machine cybernetics. The evidence for this is threefold. First, books use human machine code, that language is the means by which most of us order our thoughts.

Second, unlike machine code, words are evocative. The word 'lake' doesn't simply carry a dictionary definition, it has with it a visual image, even feeling connected with when we last saw such a thing. By skillful use of language a writer can thus have us doing most of the work, and in such a way as it most suits us – almost interactive, if you will.

Third, by virtue of the first two factors, language is magical. A personal theory is that the idea of spells and magic derives,

PRESS ANY KEY



Neuromancer and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* is a woman named Molly. Her eyes hidden behind silvered lenses, she has scalpel blades hidden under her 'burgundy nails' and a touch of sadism in her outlook. *Neuromancer* is probably still the best example of this merging of a convincing near-future environment, good characterisation and tight plotting.

Gibson's second and third novels, *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, lack the strong central character of the first, substituting more complex plotting. *Count Zero*, for instance, has three principal characters – a mercenary, art expert and software hacker – all of whom begin the book in separate chapters following apparently unconnected plot strands. As the novel progresses these are naturally wound together, but none of the characters engage the emotions as much as Case. Nevertheless *Count Zero* sees Gibson's cyberspace idea evolving with the dreams and fears of humanity taking on electronic reality. Voodoo myths such as Papa Legba become, through cyberspace, independent and real, acting to help or oppose characters as their nature sees fit.

Mona Lisa Overdrive, like *Count Zero*, shares *Neuromancer*'s environment with the same fictional corporations and so on, but takes characters from both books to provide a conclusion – of sorts – forming an unexpected cyberpunk trilogy. Perhaps most notable about the new novel is the even more complex narrative, with assorted stories and plotlines being freely developed within chapters. Charaterisation remains good, but again there isn't quite the emotional resonance of the first book. Nevertheless all the novels are genuinely first-class SF, which brilliantly extend the cyberpunk style evolved by Gibson in his short stories – now grouped together in Grafton's *Burning Chrome*.

"Neuromancer features its hero hacker asking for a modem while interfaced with the computers through a skull socket"

Backing singers

A prime reason for Gibson persevering with his fiction was the encouragement of John Shirley, an established SF writer who has become a leading light in the subgenre, writing several cyberpunk film scripts. His *Eclipse: The Song Called Youth Trilogy, Volume One* (1985) is set in the winter of 2020 after an SDI-triggered Soviet invasion of Western Europe has been driven back with tactical nukes. In the uneasy stalemate that follows, the neo-Nazi Second Alliance is manoeuvring to subvert the weakened national governments. Born out of present-day organisations like those of America's Lyndon Larouche, France's neofascist Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Front and ultra-right-wing Born Again Christians, the SA's conspiracy is conveyed in some detail with a lot of pseudo-history related by the characters. Nevertheless characters such as guitar hero Rick Rickenharp and the mercenary Smoke maintain a strong human interest, with Rickenharp's drug-ridden, cyberpunk subculture exceptionally well conveyed.

Currently out of print, *Eclipse* can be found in some cheap, remaindered bookshops suffering the legend 'To a shattered world, he brought back the music of liberty'. A good read, it's worth looking for.

Another pop enthusiast is Bruce Sterling, who claims to be an ardent reader of *New Musical Express*. Despite this his *Schismatrix* (1985) is intermittently very good indeed. Set some time in the future when humanity has spread throughout the solar system in space stations/small worlds, the novel initially concerns the divide between the techno-worshipping, ascendant Mechanists and the Shapers, who favour the genetic engineering which has shaped many of them.

Lacking any kind of strong plot, the first half of the book concerns rogue genius Abelard Lindsay's 'various scams' within a microworld and the pirate ship *Red Consensus*. The latter is a particularly impressive piece of black comedy, with the nationhood of a microworld transferred to the ship so that 'they were able to legally annex other people's property . . . This was not theft. Nations are not capable of theft . . . Protests were forwarded to the [nation's] legal system, which was . . . of formidable intricacy.' [Page 67.]

The wry humour is extended with each crew member having a title lifted from American politics – President, Speaker, Supreme Court Justice and so on. This comic touch is an ironic accompaniment to some of the most violent and tense events in Sterling's story. Unfortunately thereafter the book tends to drift off into dry political manoeuvrings which lack the impact of the first half.



Wired spirits

Throughout the novel, however, Sterling is consistently convincing about his future civilisation and technology. The Second Justice of the *Red Consensus* is a 'patchwork' of anti-ageing treatments: 'Her jawline was freckled with acne, but her wrists and shins were flaky and varicose-veined.' [Page 65.] The book's anti-hero shows the effects of a more sophisticated treatment and argues: 'Mankind's a dead issue . . . There are no more souls. Only states of mind.' [Page 74.]

A different kind of immortality is achieved by Mechanists; maintained by extensive life-support systems, they live in the electronic net with such extensive trading routines that they never seem to die. 'Think of us as angels, Mr Dze. Spirits on the wire.' Towards the end there's a vehement attack on the idiocies of trying to resist the advancing wave of technology, and the book itself often seems state-of-the-art but never quite manages to achieve a coherent, compelling plotline. Currently out of print, it can be bought from SF specialists like Odyssey 7 (Manchester) and Forbidden Planet (London and Cambridge), and is certainly worth £2.50 just for the Red Consensus.

A rather more straightforward fiction is provided by Walter Jon Williams's *Hardwired*. Just out in Orbit/ Futura paperback, this is a first-class, fast-paced SF adventure. The central characters are Cowboy, a hi-tech smuggler, and Sarah, a hard-edged assassin with a toy-boy brother to support in his efforts to remain young-looking. While the political backdrop is a touch simplistic, at least it doesn't get in the way of the plot. Moreover Toffler's argument that the Corporation exists on both sides of the Iron Curtain is nicely reflected in blipverts for Mikoyan-Gurevich (makers of such infamous Soviet jets as the Foxbat) alongside Toshiba's. Background details such as dust-bowl farmland alongside DIY stealth-jets combine to make an interesting and persuasive environment.

Written entirely in the present tense, with so few glitches you hardly notice it, *Hardwired*'s main attraction is its great prose and set-piece scenes. Cowboy's hardwired hovercraft runs and hi-tech aerial combat are superb extrapolations of existing military research – and exceptionally exciting. Similarly Sarah's first assassination is disturbingly convincing, revolving around the tracking of a ruthless executive transferred into the body of a 21-year-old girl. Consistently a hair's breadth from exploitation, *Hardwired* has some excellent, mythic characterisation, prose and story line, making it grand entertainment on the *Robocop*, if not *Blade Runner*'s scale.

Neophytes

Finally there are some 'neo-cyberpunk' novels, with the first, Michael Swanwick's *Vacuum Flowers*, dedicated to Gardner Dozois – the man who coined the 'cyberpunk' label. Published by the US firm Ace Books, it's currently available on import only, but has apparently attracted a lot of rave reviews for this relatively new author, also known for *In The Drift*. The vacuum flowers are a kind of grime which collects on the outside of space stations and must be removed by spacesuited manual workers. Work like this, together with the beaten-up hi-tech suggests an *Outland*-ish kind of cyberpunk in space. Unfortunately other, exceptionally advanced SF artefacts creep into the narrative which seem wholly removed from this near-future setting like the central character's 'Dyson world'. Such anachronisms are only partially compensated for by some nice, nouveau-culture touches such as face-painting becoming more essential than conventional standards of clothing.

The story considers the adventures of rebel Elizabeth Mudlark . . . sort of. Physically she's actually Eucrasia Walsh, but the commercially valuable personality of Mudlark has taken her mind over. Despite the critical acclaim her fast-paced escapades have attracted, I found it a little disappointing. The general level of technology and the female central character are very suggestive of John Varley's work, but lack a fraction of his characterisation, humour and plotting. Nevertheless a lot of the concepts involved are, admittedly, very interesting:

> *'Oh, I know all about you . . . You're a persona bum, currently suffering from a major personality erasure – self-inflicted, by the way – and held together by a prototypical identity overlay that is, properly speaking, the property of the Deutsche Nakasone Gesellschaft . . . [They're] going to come looking for you . . . They want a clean recording of [it] . . . [They're] worried about retaining copyright.'* [Pages 7-9.]

Another rather flawed book is New English Library's *Mercedes Nights* by Michael Weaver, which has been described as 'neo-cyberpunk'. Set in 2048, this wide-ranging novel suffers from some distinctly clunky prose, nonexistent characterisation and frequent references to contemporary music – especially Pink Floyd – which destroy any sense of genuinely living in the future. Nevertheless with World War IV in progress, but limited to Europe and Police dominating the US, it's gloomy enough to possibly be 'neo-cyberpunk'.

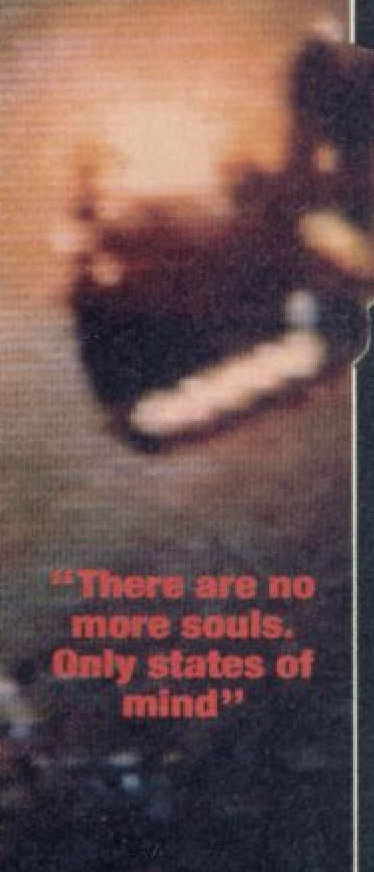
More importantly, this wry comedy of a vid-star suffering being cloned as a sex-aid has some good jokes and lots of wild ideas. In the first 50 pages, for example, we learn World War IV has been started by the US due to the collapse of its economy and a Moral Prohibition has resulted in 90% of rock music being burnt, but now this regime has been rolled back due to its excesses so that it's considered perfectly acceptable for a Presidential candidate to visit prostitutes. Among the better jokes there's a woman recognising a computer as genuinely intelligent because she's 'never heard of a computer apologising for misunderstanding a statement' before. A serious theme about police psychetechs effortlessly reediting a person's consciousness is at times genuinely chilling, but too-casual violence and a painfully 'spaced-out' LSD subplot limit the broad appeal of this lightweight comedy.

Somewhat more substantial, allegedly, is Lucius Shepard's *Life During Wartime* (Grafton £10.95). This near-future story, tells of an American soldier involved in a Central American war and being transferred into the psi-warfare section. Attracting some ecstatic reviews this is another 'neo-cyberpunk' novel and I'll be able to include a review in next month's article, along with a look at *Robocop* (the film and computer game) and Interplay's ambitious *Neuromancer* computer game.

"ONE OF THE BEST NEW WRITERS WE HAVE" – Locus
MICHAEL SWANWICK
AUTHOR OF IN THE DRIFT
VACUUM FLOWERS

in part, from less sophisticated times when a skillful use of language could cast a spell. This ability seems retained in the best fiction, and some of the worst speeches, such as in Germany where ideas and mythology have periodically overridden common sense with the most horrific consequences.

Month by month this column will try and highlight some of the best, principally SF novels you can buy. As with computer games, the vast majority of novels rarely achieve the sheer brilliance of those few 90%-plus entertainments, so don't dismiss *Neuromancer* merely because the last film tie-in you read was awful. The very best novels can provide a rollercoaster-like drama with more depth, incident and involvement than any film. For *Aliens*-like xenophobia just read *The Mote In God's Eye* by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. For a more leisurely, but far more disturbing and sensual horror try Colin Wilson's *Space Vampires/Life Force*. Whatever you want, someone's probably written a book to take you there, with Industrial Light and Magic special effects and no need to appeal to 99% of the potential cinema audience.



"There are no more souls. Only states of mind"

HOTSHOT HELLFIRE!



Be a hot shot and win yourself a Cosmic Gunfight pinball machine from ADDICTIVE!

From the tradition of *Football Manager*, **Addictive Games** are focusing their attention on future sports and one in particular, called *HotShot*, invented by the programming team **Maxwell Technologies**.

Imagine playing *Breakout* in a squash court using vacuum cleaners and the playing area viewed like a pinball machine! That gives you some idea about *HotShot*. Set in a futuristic sports arena *HotShot* is a two-player game with either two players or one player against the computer.

The objective is to clear each screen of blocks by controlling the player's horizontal movements and using the vacuum cleaners – or graviton guns as they are better known – to catch the ball and send it bouncing around the screen. Very simple and immensely enjoyable.

The traditional pinball game is the basis for a lot of *HotShot*'s gameplay, and what better way could we celebrate the launch of *HotShot* than by giving away one of the classic pinball machines as a top prize. **Cosmic Gunfight** is the name of the machine and has all the multicoloured delights of a pinball machine complete with lights, sound and a host of features. It will be delivered to the winner courtesy of **Addictive** in its full-size American cabinet. A real collector's item worth £800 in all.

To win this fabby bit of arcade history don your thinking caps and work out the words relating to the clues given and slot them in to the *HotShot* word stack. And even if you don't win the machine there are 25 runners-up prizes of *HotShot* on any of its formats – one for the winner too.

When you've completed the puzzle, cut out the coupon (or send a copy) and post it off to **HOT SHOT PINBALL COMP, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*** to arrive by September 15. As always follow the competition rules which can be found in the masthead.

CLUES

1. *HotShot* is programmed by Maxwell **what**?
2. The vacuum cleaners are really **what** guns?
3. *HotShot* is a futuristic **what** simulation?
4. Addictive is a label for which Leisure Corporation?
5. Cosmic **what**?
6. The name of the classic bat 'n' ball game genre
7. *HotShot* is published by **what** Games?

HOT SHOT WORD STACK

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Ta. Now, if I win a prize I would be grateful, nay ecstatic, if you would send me a copy of *HotShot* on the (tick as appropriate): ☐ **Spectrum**, ☐ **Commodore 64/128**, ☐ **Amstrad CPC**, ☐ **Atari ST**, ☐ **Amiga**, ☐ **PC** which just happens to be my computer.

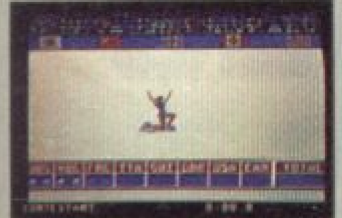
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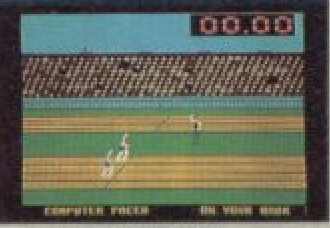
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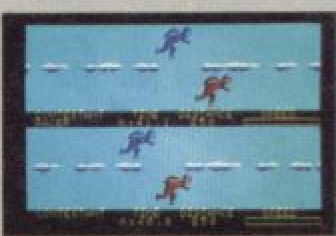
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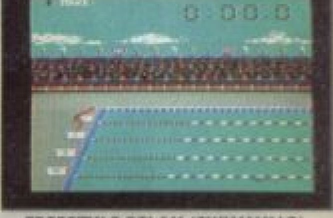
23 WAYS TO ACHIEVE SPORTING IMMORTALITY


FIGURE SKATING


100M DASH


SPEED SKATING


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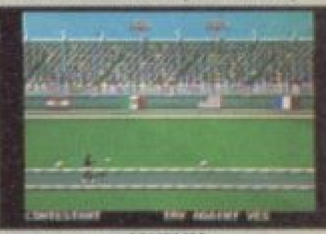

FREESTYLE RELAY (SWIMMING)

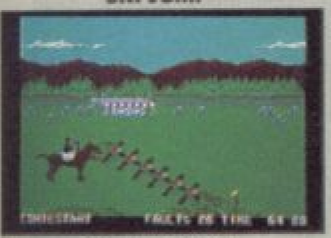

SKI JUMP

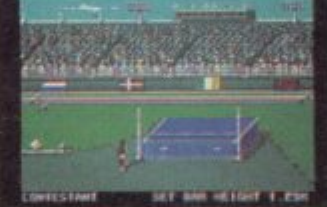

BOBSLED


TRIPLE JUMP


ROWING


JAVELIN


SHOW JUMPING


HIGH JUMP


FENCING


CYCLING



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Screenshots taken from CBM 64/128, Spectrum and Amstrad formats.

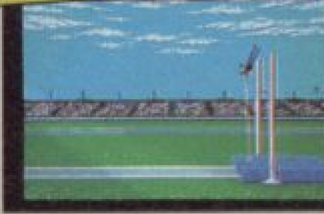


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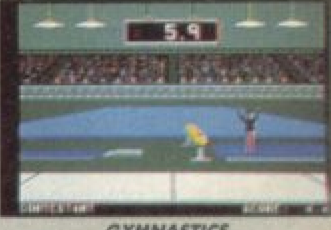
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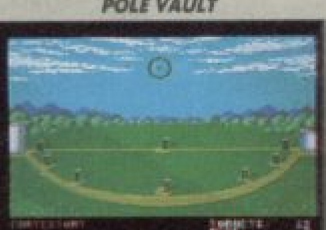

POLE VAULT

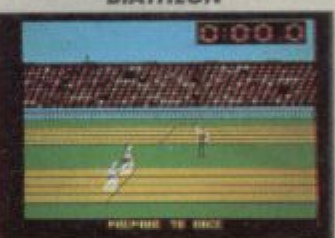

BIATHLON

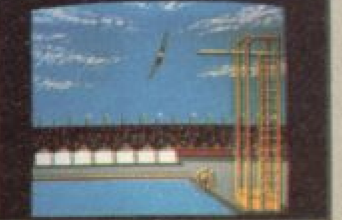

GYMNASTICS


FREE SKATING


100M FREESTYLE (SWIMMING)


SKEET SHOOTING


4 x 400M RELAY


DIVING

THE NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS SECOND PROGRESS REPORT

The third qualifying round for the Computer Games Championship, sponsored by US Gold and the National Association Of Boys Clubs and organised by NEWSFIELD, hit Birmingham in early July and featured yet more eager gamesplayers battling for the 1988 title

BIRMINGHAM

July 2

Despite pouring rain, the third qualifying heat for the National Computer Games Championship took place with style and great competitive spirit. In addition to the entrants who had arranged to compete, many more hopefulls arrived on the day ready and willing to tackle the two new US Gold games – *Bionic Commando* (Spectrum rounds) and *The Great Giana Sisters* (Commodore).

Pizza-munching Nick Roberts, CRASH's playing tipster, arrived to adjudicate the Spectrum rounds while Tony Samuels, Software Development Assistant for US Gold, kept control of the Commodore playe.s. US Gold's Marketing Assistant, Danielle 'Woody' Woodyatt, along with Roger Bennett and Andrew Smales from Newsfield's Advertisement Department, did a sterling job organising the day's events.

The rounds were held at Birmingham's Highgate Sports and Leisure centre and it was the first time *Bionic Commando* and *The Great Giana Sisters* were shown to the public – making it a real test for the competitors; although they were given practice rounds before battle commenced.

The Spectrum rounds were a nail-biting contest with high scores being achieved. Top of the lot came **Paul Mellerick** from Leicester with an admirable score of 35,990. Battle for second place was close, but it was **Simon Hadlington** from Stourbridge who scooped it with 34,300, only 20 points in front of **Gavin Cavendish**, also from Leicester, who came third scoring 34,280. Fourth place went to **Adrian Grubb** from Nuneaton with 27,240, and fifth was **Trevor Muller** from Birmingham on 12,010.

Proving their ambidexterity, Paul Mellerick and Simon Hadlington dashed over to take up Commodore joysticks, and shattered everyone by repeating their Spectrum success, only the other way round: Simon came first with 7,980 and Paul second with 6,915. This is a duo to watch out for at the finals. From Bangor in Wales, **Matthew Sewell** managed third position, scoring 5,360 just in front of **Michael Bonham** in fourth on 4,815. Fifth place went to **Justin Finch** hailing from Birmingham with a score of 4,150.



All ten now go forward to do battle in London in the semi-finals to be held on August 18 at Waterloo station.



Ever Onward . . .

The semi-finals should be over by the time you read this, after which it's time for the real testing as 12 candidates compete for the title: 1988 National Computer Games Champion. The finals take place at this year's Personal Computer Show at Earl's Court and you are all welcome to come along and join in the fun. Even if you don't get a ringside seat you won't miss out as all the action is being shown on the 100 square foot video wall sponsored by **Pepsi Cola**. Overall winners from the Commodore and Spectrum group both receive £1,000 worth of hardware/software courtesy of US Gold and Centresoft. The two winners then go forward to the ultimate test: playing a new game on an Atari ST in the **Pepsi Cola Challenge**. Stay tuned for next month's announcement of the final placings.

The National Computer Games Championships is sponsored by US Gold in association with the National Association of Boys Clubs and the Personal Computer Show and organised by Newsfield Limited, publishers of CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and THE GAMES MACHINE. We gratefully acknowledge the kind assistance of British Rail, the British Airports Authority, Dixons for supplying the Spectrum +3s and monitors, Commodore (UK) for supplying the Commodore 128s and monitors, and Konix for the joysticks. And thanks to the staff and members of the local Boys Clubs for all their help and patience!

POSTE HASTE

THE GAMES MACHINE's regular Play By Mail column

This month we turn our attention to a *Troll's Bottom* but criminal thoughts are never far from our minds. The best way to become notorious is to torch the local church. Read on . . .

TROLL'S BOTTOM
K C GAMES

This earthily named PBM was originally run by **Project Basilisk**, who designed both it and *Creephouse* (TGM **008**). Now the megalithic KJC have obtained the UK and European rights to *Troll's Bottom* and relaunched it with a glossy new rulebook. The game takes place on a small, isolated island known as The Land Of Bones Troll's Bottom. Inhabiting the island are Moon Trolls (distant relations of Stone Trolls) who are uniformly greedy, unpleasant and nosey. The only thing able to put up with them for long are their constant companions the King Vultures. These live off a Troll's leavings and the relationship between a Troll and his Vulture is so close that should one die, the other almost invariably does so too. Vultures are useful to Troll's for bringing back information on their long-ranging flights. A Troll generally divides his days between hunting, tunneling and eating. The objective of the player is to ensure his Troll is the last one alive in this game of survival.

Troll's Bottom island is roughly rectangular island and contains over 400 holes, 40 holes by 10. As a Troll moves around the island he must specify how much strength he will expend in any particular task. Each player has a maximum of 134 strength points each turn, but the more strength used the bigger the Troll's hunger and need to hunt. Another influence on the Troll's orders is his state of Build, Morale and Sanity. There are thirteen states for these, as with Strength, with the former depending on the outcome of battles and the latter more generally on the success or failure of orders.

To survive the Troll must eat, humans being particularly tasty. These must be hunted, but if caught are added to your Food Reserve. Also edible are various fruits, although these can affect sanity and morale due to the potent liquid within. Due to their size these can be used as weapons, as can bones.

As in *It's A Crime* orders are given in a simple letter number combination, with the letter standing for an order and the number allocating the Strength allocated to it. In a normal turn up to five orders can be given, plus an eat action, for two credits. Giving a maximum of ten orders costs three credits. Options open to a Troll include (A)ttack another Troll, (D)ig a Hole, (E)at food, (G)ive an item, (H)unt, (I)nvestigate another Troll, (L)ook out for a specific Troll, (M)ove to another Hole, make (N)oise to improve morale, (R)ob and run away from another Troll's Hole, have a Vulture (S)eek and report back on a Troll, (T)unnel from a Hole, (U)se an item, fly an item by (V)ulture transport and make a (W)eapon.

Also to be found on the island are non-player characters, Trees, for example, can be grown from any seeds you might find. These can subsequently be climbed and chopped, besides providing food, but once they grow to a certain size a Tree Guardian will appear. Also of use are Moonworms which can tunnel for you, but if they accidentally tunnel into hot Lava.. Much rarer is the Arghalin Eagle, which might fly a Troll somewhere if he does something for her. Balrogs are unfortunately not to so rare, these massive creatures spread lava wherever they go and if they stumble on your Hole it may well mean a fiery death for your Troll.

Troll's Bottom seems a fun and relatively simple game that could take some time to complete. The starter pack is free and includes four free credits. Credits are thereafter 50p each and at 10 must be bought at any one time. If you're interested write to ***KJC Games, P.O.Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs, FY5 2UL.***



On the *It's A Crime* front TGM has had an interesting letter from Robert Hayden of Lings, Northampton.

Dear TGM,

As a prelude to an alliance, I'll offer a couple of tips. Firebomb churches for notoriety, schools are the next bet. Robbing banks doesn't seem to particularly profitable, far better to use the men burning a warehouse. Acting tough will usually gain you something, though exactly what it is, I don't know.

I think *It's A Crime* is the best PBM I have yet played, and I've played *Knights Of Avalon. Casus Belli* has some fantastic diplomacy but turnarounds have been very erratic. Hopefully now KJC are taking it over the service will improve. *Starglobe* is way too expensive and *Crisis* is fun for the mutually insulting but too simple.

Cheers,
Rob

Your offer's under consideration Rob, thanks for the advise and we'll print your turf value table if you drop us a line about it.

More general advise is furnished by Sid Sayers, of Webridge, Surrey.

Dear TGM,

In the May article you're play testing *It's A Crime*. However the true game will not have started until you come across other gangs and clashes begin. It's a very good game and worth sticking with until you get the full feel of it.

You ask for suggestions for further game play exercises. May I make this point? There are two kinds of PBM game, firstly the game that has a winner or an objective to achieve whereafter the game is completed. These are usually computer moderated. The other kind is the ongoing game world where the player develops a character in a game, such as in *Saturnalia*. Maybe this type of game should be the next type to be tried.

I think that many players would like to have or share playing tips, and your magazine would be a good forum to print these, just like tips are printed for computer adventure games.

How about a players' league table with various factors, for which readers/players can vote - this is probably the best way of showing which games are worth their metal. A rating system might include such headings as anticipation, difficulty of rules, diplomacy, value for money, percentage rating overall, etc. How about a readers' write-up of a game to supplement your article.?

Thanks once more for a terrific magazine.

Yours faithfully, Sid Sayers

Thank you, Sid. *Poste Haste* would certainly be glad to act as a forum for PBM tips. As for a players' league, if enough people write in we'll try and produce a table for it. Similarly we'll be more than pleased to print readers' reviews and might even offer a prize for particularly incisive and well-written ones.

Leaving the ball firmly in the reader's court Poste Haste draws to a close for the month. The address for your massed letters is **POSTE HASTE, THE GAMES MACHINE**, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*. If we're not buried alive we'll print the best nex' munf.

THE TYPICAL GAMES MACHINIST

Find out who you are, how you get there, what you think and who your co-readers are. These are the results of THE GAMES MACHINE Questionnaire

We asked you in TGM **006** to answer loads of questions aimed at discovering who you are, what you do and, most importantly, what you think of THE GAMES MACHINE. From the answers received, we can formulate editorial policies for the next twelve months ahead, and your efforts in filling out the forms will help us make THE GAMES MACHINE even better in your eyes than it already is! Several thousand forms were returned, and the following results have been compiled from a randomly selected universe of 1,000

There are some surprises in store too! The first one in the average readership age – it works out at **19.33** years, with the biggest single group being aged 16. Astonishingly, for a games orientated magazine, **45.9%** – almost half the total readership – are aged between 18 and 30 (see the bar graph).

But there were no surprises in the the first part of the next question – are you male or female? – which showed that TGM's readership follows the form of almost every other entertainment computer magazine in the history of the business: **98.4%** answered 'male', only **1.6%** claimed 'female' status.

However, a surprisingly high proportion of TGM readership is in full-time work, reflecting the much higher age group the magazine attracts than either CRASH or ZZAP! 64. Still at school are **51.5%**, at college/university **14.6%**, while **26%** are in full-time work and **12.7%** in part-time employment. The unemployed readership figure is **7.9%**. Well over one-third, therefore, are in some form of paid employment.

On money matters, we asked several questions; first, how much do you spend on computer games every week? The average worked out at **£6.80**. The breakdown is as follows: £2-5 **59.3%**, £6-10 **27.1%**, £11-20 **10.5%**, over £20 **3.1%**.

Next we wanted to know whether you have purchased a utility program within the past six months, and **27.8%** had, while **25.1%** intend doing so within the next six months. The same question was asked of computer peripherals: **31.2%** bought one during that past six months and **35.9%** will do so shortly. In terms of preferences, the favourite purchases are music utilities, graphics programs and wordprocessors in that order, and on the hardware side: disk drives/hard disks, joysticks and printers.

Do you intend buying a new computer or games console in the next six months? **33.7%** do, leaving **66.3%** quite happy as they are. So what do the 33.7% want? Top of the list comes 16-bit: Amiga wins out handsomely, **37.6%** intend buying one soon, followed by Atari ST at **21%**. Then there's a big drop to **7.8%** who want a Sega console and **5.9%** want a Nintendo Entertainment System. **5.9%** want a new Commodore 64/128 and the same proportion will buy an Atari XE console. Down again to MSX-II – **4.9%** want one, while IBM PC compatibles share the preference with Spectrum 128/+3 at **4.4%**. Three machines bring up the low end of the list: Amstrad CPC **1.5%**, Archimedes (the price perhaps?) **1%** and finally BBC Electron at **0.5%**.

We wanted to know what is the major influence on your decision to buy a computer game. In order of preference: magazine reviews **36.8%**, a friend's recommendation **14.7%**, game price **14%**, advertising **11.6%**, the game's author **11.6%** and lastly the game's publisher **11.4%**.

ARE YOU WELL READ?

When did you first buy THE GAMES MACHINE? **74.4%** started with TGM **001**, the other quarter joining in since TGM **002** up to TGM **006**. The fall-off in regularity of purchase is very small – **68.3%** have bought every issue. And for every copy sold **2.17** people read it. This is a lower per-copy readership figure than expected, but reflects the generally older age group TGM appeals to. Per-copy readership figures for magazines more commonly found in school playgrounds run much higher.

We asked how you obtain your copy of TGM: **73.7%** buy off the newsstand, **20%** either reserve a copy regularly with their newsagent or have it delivered and **6.3%** get it through subscription.

The other magazines you buy regularly showed *ACE* leading the field by a margin from *Computer & Video Games*. The percentages are calculated from the total mentions made in the forms: *Ace* **26.6%**, *Computer & Video Games* **24%**, ZZAP! 64 **14.5%**, CRASH **12.3%**, *Commodore User* **10.1%**, *Popular Computing Weekly* **8.5%** and *Commodore Computing International* **4%**. All other magazine mentions were insignificant in the total.

A similar calculation was made for those magazines you end up reading but do not buy – some interesting reversals: *Computer & Video Games* **19.8%**, *ACE* **18.3%**, CRASH **15.1%**, ZZAP! 64 **14.6%**, *Popular Computing Weekly* **14.1%**, *Commodore User* **13.1%** and *Commodore Computing International* **5%**. All other mentions were insignificant.

Before we moved onto TGM's contents, we asked what sort of games you enjoy the most. No real surprises here! Top of the list comes shoot-'em-ups at **22.3%**, followed by arcade-adventures **20.9%**, simulations **16.8%**, adventures **14.7%**, strategy **12.5%**, roleplaying games **12.2%** and all other types making up a total of **1%**.

"Almost half the total readership are aged between 18 and 30"



"Amiga wins out handsomely, 37.6% intend buying one soon"

CONTENTS

We divided TGM's main regular contents up into 18 sections, and here there is a surprise, because – by mention – most regular features prove almost equally popular across the board! However, there is a preference, so here's the TGM Top 18:

1. Reviews
2. Previews
3. Competitions
4. News
5. General features
6. Readerpage
7. Graphic Matters
8. Information Desk
9. Confrontation: Coin-op
10. Advertisements
11. Rob Steel's Adventures
12. Hi-tech gadgets, toys etc
13. Industry features
14. Subscription offers
15. Fantasy Games
16. Music Matters
17. Boardgames
18. Mercy Dash

Mercy needn't get too upset – the range of percentages ran from **6.97%** at the top to **3.17%** at the bottom, which indicates that on mass TGM's readership shares a varied and catholic taste.

There are a few sections which we might include in future, and we wanted to know your opinion. **54.3%** think we should include the Gallup software charts, but a more emphatic **66.2%** want to see a readers' chart included. Play by mail (which has been included since TGM**006**) polled a **35.4%** favourable vote. Less than half want game high scores in TGM, but nonetheless a large minority at **44.9%**. Playing Tips is the most wanted section, **84.1%** would like them (and again, we have started tips in Information Desk). Another reasonably-sized minority want to see

regular Compunet coverage (**42.5%**), but the closest-run yes/no is for regular video coverage: **45.8%** say 'yes', **54.2%** 'no'.

SOFTWARE COVERAGE

Rating out of a maximum of 10 points, TGM's software coverage in the News gets **7.8**, previews **8** and reviews **8.3**. Overall, the multi-format reviews received a hefty vote of confidence. **78.2%** think they are detailed enough, **76.4%** think they are long enough. However, only **55.4%** think there are enough screen shots, so perhaps we will have to try and cram a few more in – somehow!

How often do you agree with the review ratings? A lot, it seems, but not at the expense of being stupidly flattering, because only **3.7%** reply 'always', leaving a satisfyingly huge percentage – **92.5%** – saying 'mostly'. **3.5%** rarely agree, and an infinitesimal **0.3%** never agree – some people you just can't please. As to changing the current system **38.1%** suggest it could be altered and **61.9%** are happy with the way it is.

When buying software **31.5%** always use TGM as a source of reference, **65.3%** use it sometimes and **3.2%** never do.

The covers are a cause of concern to a few readers, **4.8%** think they're rubbish, while **44.3%** think they do their job and **50.9%** consider them to be excellent.

GENERAL BUYING HABITS

Most of the rest was largely about who you are and how you achieve it. The weekly income range well reflects the wide age band of the magazine's readership, **63%** earning anything between £5 and £30. **38%** earn over £30 a week, with over **18%** pulling in more than £100. And TGM readers are clothes conscious too: **31.7%** shop in large retail chains and a massive **50.7%** going the step up to high street fashion. **8.6%** of top dressers attend specialist fashion shops, leaving **9%** who buy their clothes from Other . . .

Electronically, TGM readers are well set up: **90%** have access to a record player and slightly more – **95%** – to a cassette deck. At the high end, **31%** have access to a compact disc player and **85%** to a video recorder. The statistics on how many records, CDs and videos you buy are complex, and of course in each category not everyone answered (people who buy CD albums are less likely to buy vinyl singles for instance), but out of interest, for those who gave a figure for one purchase per month, the result is: record singles **74**, record LPs **143**, prerecorded audio cassettes **142**, CDs **51**, pop music videos **37** and budget films on video **43**.

A similar problem complicates the collation how many films on video you hire, but TGM's total readership hires an average of **2.9** videos every month, a very high figure considering how many returned forms showed no hirings at all, and as high as it is because those who do hire, hire a lot! TGM readers also consume an average of **14.9** canned drinks a month and **17.27** packets of assorted crisps, sweets and peanuts (toothpaste consumption must be pretty high as well!). And for those who don't stay at home evenings, TGM readers visit the cinema **0.72** times a month.

"TGM readers consume 14.9 canned drinks a month and 17.27 packets of crisps, sweets and peanuts"

We're better book buyers, however, at a monthly average of **1.39** books purchased. The preferences list is interesting: top comes horror/fantasy at **20.17%**, followed by: science fiction **16.61%**, humour **15.43%**, computer reading **13.84%**, general fiction **12%**, non-fiction **7.98%**, film and TV tie-ins **6.99%**, war themes **3.76%**, thriller/detective stories **3.3%**, romance **3.3%** and historical themes **2.57%**.

Leisure activities other than playing with computers resulted in a list far too long to go into, but the top ten preferences were as follows: football, pool/snooker/billiards, badminton, tennis, cricket, swimming, rugby, basketball, squash and running/athletics – all sports you will notice! Craft hobbies are mostly well dow the list, two exceptions being the passive activities of reading and listening to music (numbers 11 and 12 respectively). Art appears at number 18 and model-making at number 27. TGM readers are obviously very active people.

"Fast food eating shows MacDonalds coming out favourite with 20.23% of readers"

As we have already seen, TGM's readership is comprised of a large percentage of people age 18 and over, so the figure for those holding a bank account reflects that: **68.4%**. And the banks in question? Barclays comes top of the list with **26.67%** of TGM readers having their accounts there, closely followed by National Westminster with **20.35%**, then: Midland **16.84%**, Lloyds **11.23%**, T.S.B. **11.23%**, Post Office/National Giro **6.67%** and Royal Bank of Scotland **4.21%**.

Slightly less readers hold building society accounts, **48%**, of which Halifax has the highest percentage of TGM readers at **32.8%**, followed by: Abbey National **24.86%**, Nationwide-Anglia **12.69%**, Leeds **6.87%**, Woolwich **5.82%**, Britannia **5.29%**, Alliance & Leicester **4.76%**, Bradford & Bingley **2.12%**, National Provincial **1.59%**, Cheltenham & Gloucester **1.59%**, Gateway **1.06%** and West Bromwich **0.53%**.

Fast food eating shows (perhaps inevitably) MacDonalds coming out favourite with **20.23%** of readers, closely chased by your local chippie at **18.93%**. The rest are: Wimpy **15.8%**, Kentucky Fried Chicken **14.1%**, Pizza Hut **13.19%**, Pizza Land **12.79%** and a joint called Others at **4.96%**.

Having dragged the takeaways back home and decided against a hired video, the TV stations you watch by percentage preference are: BBC1 **29.11%**, ITV **25.77%**, Channel 4 **19.36%**, BBC2 **17.76%** and satellite channels **8.01%**. TGM readers average **3.16** hours per day watching television.

Preferred radio stations are Radio 1 **27.75%**, Independent commercial **24.18%**, Luxembourg **21.6%**, local BBC **14.45%** and pirates **12%**.

And that concludes the voting from Ludlow.

THE GAMES MACHINE editorial team would like to thank the thousands of readers who filled out and returned their forms; it is, after all, only through your efforts here that we can work toward making TGM the best magazine for your money. Don't expect any sudden or sweeping changes as a result of the questionnaire, it all takes time to absorb, but you can certainly expect to see many ideas suggested here incorporated soon enough.

READER CLASSIFIEDS

Your small ads are reaching over 200,000 other readers in Britain and around the world!

FOR SALE

CBM64, D/Drive, C2N, Action Replay MK4, £1000 games (many on disk) including Platoon, Wizball and Bubble Bobble, Neos mouse. All excellent condition. Worth over £1000. Will sell for £450. Phone Glenrothes (0592) 741817

CBM64 1541 D/Drive, new Dattesete over £1000 worth games on disk & tape + Music Maker & Joystick £400. Sega Master System + 6 games including Outrun, Rocky, Black Belt, only £120. Still boxed. Phone (0493) 857878

Sega Master System and 4 games. Only £80. Write to Gary Sharp, 22 Whinhill Road, Banff. AB4 1BX.

C64 Games on disk for sale. All originals, including S.E.U.C.K, Predator, Hunter's Moon and more. Call for list. All in excellent condition and have full documentation. Tel. Jake at (01)806 2739.

Buy my £500+ worth of software for £450 and get my Spectrum 128, my +3, joystick and tape recorder free. Worth over £900. Ask for Chris on 0592 772058 ono.

CBM 64 Games for sale less than half price, old and new stuff. Write for list to Kevin Mannion, 22 Banner Street, St Helens, Merseyside WA20 3TJ, or phone 56415, all originals.

CBM 64C, C2N Tape, 2 joysticks, leads, manual, boxed 10 weeks old, 6 software packs total 37 games worth £230 but accept £150 ono. Also Acorn Electron, leads, manual, demo tape, vgc only £30. Buyer collects. Evenings Tel L'boro 267920

Sega Master System, 2 joypads, Hang-on etc. plus Konix Autofire joystick. Also Astro Warrior and Pit Pot games. Unwanted present worth £140 bargain at £85. Stuart Tilley, Nirvana, Cocks Hill, Bolingey, Perranporth, Cornwall (0872) 572127

Spectrum games, Utilities etc. all originals, Driller and GAC £6 each. Animator 1 and The Writer (48K) £5 each. Many more SAE for list. Mark Voas, 42 Saltburn Road, Wallasey, Merseyside L45 8LU

CBM 128, 1541C, Compunet modem, C2N, +£300 worth software, all boxed and original tapes. Worth £800+. Will sell at £295 ono. Phone Richard anytime on Crawley (0293) 562125 for further details. Thank you for reading this!

CBM 64, datasette, joystick, books, magazines, Reset, 200 games including Hunter's Moon, Arkanoid, Gryzor, Seuck, Skate Or Die, Combat School, Nebulus, Firefly, 1K+, Ten Great Games Two plus more. £275 ono. (0708) 42909 after 5pm.

Commodore Games originals £3 each, £12 for five. CBM 64 computer, datasette, utility, cartridges, year's warranty £200. 1541 disk drive, 50 blank disks, covers, £100. MPS803 printer, box, printer paper £150. Phone Andy 0252 521005

Amiga and Spectrum Software (original), Spectrum+3 for sale. For every £3 spent get free software. Also mags for sale. Send SAE to Mark, 59 Hood Close, West Croydon, Surrey CR0 3SR. Amiga pen pals wanted.

Nintendo Rob (Robotic Operating Buddy) with Gyromite Game Pak and all accessories for use with game. Used only a few times. £40. Contact Jason (0533) 605964.

Spectrum+2, joystick, Multiface 128, £50 of mags and £300 of games, worth £550. Sell for £235. Phone (0224) 695399.

Spectrum+3 for sale, with 11 games on disk, Devpac and 5 blank disks. Comes with joystick and cassette adaptor, worth over £250, will sell for £160. Tel 051 355 2254.

Want to buy CBM 64, £360+ worth games, mostly new, 3 joysticks, datasette, worth £400+. Sell for £220 or swop everything for Nintendo Deluxe, or ordinary system. Phone Perth Scotland (0738) 20851 and ask for Faisal.

CBM 64 Games for sale including Predator, Pirates, Seuck, Matchday 2 and many others for only £6 or less. Please contact Kiranjit after 4pm on 0793 523011.

Spectrum 48K and Interface – £35. CBM 64C and C2N, loads of original software, backup cartridge, joysticks – £120. Excelerator+ disk drive, disks, backup cartridge – £120. Neos mouse and cheese – £20. All above for £250. Phone 01 657 4420 (Phil).

AMSTRAD CPC 6128 green monitor, DMP 2000 printer, Euromax Pro joystick, word processor, utilities, many games. Excellent condition. Price £350. Contact Nicholas Whitmore, 25 Kelso Gardens, Denton, Burn, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE15 7DB. Tel: Tyneside 2745849.

CBM 64C, cassette unit, joystick, mouse, games, books. Over £300 worth. Sell £150. Phone Brighton 697079.

Amstrad PCW8512, 6 months old. Plus Tomahawk, Batman, Trivial Pursuits, Psi 5, Dbase II, Sc 2, Strike Force Harrier and many other, disks, books, 12 months old Amstrad 8000. Worth £950, accept £500. First good offer accepted. Reluctant sale. Phone 0952 618917.

Sega Console for sale with 4 games. Hang On, Quartet, Secret Commando, Astro Warrior. Still boxed. £60. Phone Canvey 682612

Mega ST4 with 1224 colour VDU plus games as new. Will accept £900 ono. Worth £1600. Phone 0274 542893. Graeme Bradford after 5.30pm. Can be used as business and home computer.

CBM 64, 2 top quality joysticks, C2N tape deck. £600 worth of games including top games like Driller, Cybernoid, Matchday 2, Skate Or Die. Perfect condition. Boxed with manual. £240. Tel: Leeds 870389 after 6.30pm.

Spectrum 48K, printer, datacorder, joystick, interface and £150 of software. Worth £355. Will take £160. Phone Dave on (02612) 2382 after 6pm weekdays except Wednesday.

CBM 64, C2N, 1541 disk drive, Comp Pro joystick, Expert cartridge, lockable disk box, over 300 games, including Shoot Up Constr. Kit. £230 ono. Dave Perry, 46 Haven Road, Fazakerley, Liverpool 10. Call after 6pm weekdays.

CBM 64, 1541 disk drive, two tape decks, two joysticks, dustcovers, over 500 disk games, inc. latest software, Action Replay MKIV Pro, Disk-Util, Currah Speech, many magazines. Excellent condition, worth £800. Sell for £350. Phone Paul 091 2574154.

CBM 64 Software for sale. All tape format and original software, many bargains, old and new games alike. Send SAE for list to: Paul Owens, 9 Sidlaw, Preston Grange, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE29 9ea.

Atari 520STFM complete with joystick, many games (worth £500), blank disks, p.d. software, art programs, books and magazines. Total value £900. All boxed and in excellent condition. Sell for only £350. Phone 01 693 8810.

Sega Master System, only three weeks old, fully boxed, includes Hang On. Will sell for £80. Please ring (01) 428 7705 weekends only. Ask for Vidur. 42 Royston Park Road, Hatch End, Middx HA5 4AF.

BBC Model B, data recorder, £200 of games, £20 of magazines. Will sell for £150 ono. Tel: 051 608 2764. Ask for Michael.

Amstrad CPC 464, with colour monitor, lightpen, joystick and many top new release games including Gryzor, Renegade, Barbarian and Ikari Warriors. Complete with computer desk. Excellent condition £200. Phone Sheffield 471678 after 4pm.

Atari STFM, mouse, joystick, 30 disks of games including Carrier Command, dust cover, mouse mat, disk box, magazines. First rate condition, still boxed and under guarantee. £295. Tel: Herts 0707 325359. Ask for Julian (evenings).

Nintendo, light gun, plus Hogan's Alley/Duck Hunt/Pinball/Ice Climber cartridges, plus Wico joystick. The lot for £75 only! Phone 01 519 2777 extn 134. Ask for Wendy Cleaver 9-5 (Mon to Fri).

Spectrum 128K, joystick port and joystick, 30 games, books, magazines, worth more than £400. Sell for £100. Phone: 01 554 8770 after 4pm and ask for Stefan.

Amstrad CPC 464 games for sale. All originals: Combat School, Garfield, Champions, AND, Arcade Force, Compilations, Sorcery, Platoon, Get Dexter, Flying Shark, Game Over, Rolling Thunder, Rambo, Fairlight plus many others. Phone Keith 0705 826604.

Sega Master System plus 9 games inc. Rocky and Space Harrier. All only 3 months old. Hardly used. All still boxed. £130. Tel 01 654 6873.

CBM 128 plus 1571 Disk Drive plus Action Replay copier, multi load disk, blank disks plus software. Two Quickshots, 1541, data cassette. Alltogether over £800 worth. Sale price £350 ono. Tel: 01 732 1021 after 6.30pm.

CBM 128, 1571 disk drive, Sound Expander, 5 octave keyboard, Expert cartridge, software incl. Superscript, Bard's Tale, Stealth Fighter, many others. All Boxed, cost £900+. Sell for £470 ono. Tel: Chelmsford (0245) 269344 after 5.30pm.

Amiga A500 with games, joysticks, extra manuals, modulator, mouse, all system disks and books. Only 1 month old with box. Hardly used, mint condition, cost over £800. Only £455 ono. Phone Bas (0268) 42474.

Sega Master System, including 5 games, Afterburner, Outrun, Blackbelt, Global Defence, Hang-On. Excellent condition, boxed as new. Only £110 ono. Phone Clive on Peterborough (0733) 828317.

Amstrad CPC 464, colour monitor, disk drive, Multiface II, joysticks, speech synthesizer with speakers, dust covers, 100+ games (tapes/disks). All great condition. For quick sale £400 ono. Tel: 0823 275615.

CBM 64, data cassette, 1541C Disk Drive, MPS 803 printer, 1520 printer/plotter, Final cartridge II, software worth £320+, many computer magazines. Only £300. Tel: Chelmsford 321990 and ask for Paul.

Spectrum+2, £550 of software, joystick, 100+ mags. Total cost of above £750. Bargain at £375! Half price! Phone Martin on (0753) 853646 after 4.30pm.

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CBM 128/64 disk drive, tape recorder, joystick, manual, over 100 original games inc. Alter Ego, Gunship (disk) and Bionic Commando, Wizball, IO, IK+ (tape). All boxed, £290 ono. Tel: Gordon (061) 370 3473 after 6pm (Bargain).

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Spectrum+2, with Quickshot II Turbo and Cheetah joystick, 100 games which include Matchday 2, Crazy Cars and many other new ones. All for £150. Great bargain! Phone 864 8252. Ask for Mark.

Sega Master System, 3 months old, plus Hang On and Wonder Boy cartridges free. £75. Write to: Daniel Leyden, 76 Hillhouse Ave, Bathgate, West Lothian EH48 4BB.

Atari 520 STFM, boxed, with 5 month guarantee, joystick, mouse and loads of software including Carrier Command, Xenon and Pro-Copy. £299 ono. Also Optima 4 W.D. radio control racing car with R.C. gear. £150 ono. Ring Tom on 0603 868878

Atari ST Games for sale. Barbarian (Palace) £7.50, Gauntlet £7, Impact £8, Xenon £10, Wizball £10. All originals in boxes. Ring Tonbridge (0732) 354233.

Atari 520STFM, disk box, joystick, £400 worth of software, Outrun, Gauntlet 2 etc. All boxed and vgc. Worth £700, yours for just £300 ovno. Please Tel: (0509) 505148 after 6pm (Ask for Matt).

Amstrad CPC Software for sale. Some disk, mostly tape. Some old, some not so old. All cheap! SAE for info. Mr. Lee, 48 Field Road, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 1JP.

Sega with 3 games guaranteed only £64. Also CBM 64 with datacassette, joystick, Action Replay 4, over £1000 worth of software (all new). Music Maker, boxed, all guaranteed, bargain price £149 ono. The lot for £200. Tel (0253) 43561 after 6pm.

Nintendo Entertainment System with Super Mario Bros, Kung Fu, 10 Yard Fight, Donky Kong Jr and joystick. Also CBM 64 with 60+ games, datasette, joystick and magazines. Price open to offers. Phone Mike on 02612 2985.

Atari 520 STFM complete system for sale, including printer, top quality software, programming books, magazines etc. Everything under 6 months old and worth well over £600. Will sell for £400. Phone 0454 312135 evenings.

Sega Master System, and four games. Only £80. Write to Gary Sharp, 22 Whinhill Road, Banff AB4 1BX.

CBM 64 Games on disk for sale. All originals including SEUCK, Predator, Hunter's Moon and more. Call for list. All in excellent condition and have full documentation. Tel: 01 806 2739.

Amstrad CPC 464 colour monitor, FREE extra cassette recorder, joystick (Pro Plus), loads of top games (£500 worth – including GAC), altogether worth £900. Sell only £200. Tel: (0342) 810407.

Sega Light Phasor, unwanted competition prize. Retails at £45, offers around £30. Write to J W Williams, 36 Worcester Road, West Hagley, Worcs DY9 0LD. No reasonable offer refused.

Atari 520 STFM, plus a 1 Meg Triangle disk drive. Lots of software, books and magazines, blank disks and applications. Still under guarantee. £350. Phone Dover (0304) 823052.

Sega Master System with two joysticks and 7 months guarantee. Games worth £95 including Space Harrier, Quartet and Astro Warrior. Perfect condition, only £120 ono. Phone (0245) 268990 and ask for Matthew.

CBM 64, datasette, joystick, plus over 250 games including many classics such as Gunship, Elite, Uridium, Zoids. Worth well over £1000. Will accept £450 ono. Phone Tony 01 472 4432 after 7pm.

CBM 128, datasette, Excelerator+ disk drive, lightpen, books, approx. £450 of games, all mint condition, worth over £700. Bargain at £400 ono. Tel: Roth (0709) 814678.

CBM 64, tape deck (both still under guarantee), Comp Pro joystick, loads of mags and games (60) including Platoon, Target, Renegade, Samurai Warrior, Side-Arms, Rastan etc. Sell for £170. Tel: Bradford (0274) 567753 after 6pm.

Amstrad CPC 464 Mono, modulator, dust cover, mags, joystick, over 40 games including ATF, Elite, Gauntlet, Wizball, Tai-Pan, Space Harrier etc. £175 ono. Phone Luton 0582 863579 after 7.30pm.

Amstrad CPC 464, modulator, joystick, over £1000 games, Animation programme, 22 magazines. £240 ono. Also Sega Master System with 2 joysticks, 5 games including Afterburner, Quartet, Worldsoccer. £140 ono. All excellent condition. Phone 061 653 6044.

CBM 64 plus Dragon 32, all leads, boxed, B/W TV, 2 datasettes, £235 original tapes, blank tapes, 4 joysticks (1 damaged), mags, freeze frame. Worth £860 selling £400 or swap for ST and £50. Ring Mark on 0656 734150.

BBC B computer and tape deck plus joystick. Over £100 of software. Sell for £200 ono. Phone Natalie at 01 500 4773. Address 7 Brook Way, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6AA.

CBM 64 plus 1541 disk drive, C2N datasette, modem, Expert cartridge, joystick, disk box, many magazines and over £1500 worth of games on disk and tape. £360 ono. Phone Retford (0777) 703575.

1541 CBM disk drive plus disk games including Alter Ego, GAC, Super Zaxxon, Elite, Racing Destr. Set. £100. Also spare datasette and power pack £15 each. Tel Tring 2647.

Spectrum 48K, DkTronics keyboard, printer, 2 joysticks, 2 interfaces, tape recorder, over £650 worth of software including Driller, GAC, Starglider. The lot cost over £950. Sell for £200 ono. Phone (0772) 749804. Buyer must collect.

Atari 520 STFM, 8 months old, £210 original software inc. Carrier Command, Star Wars, Xenon, plus others like Outrun, Dungeon Master. 40 cap. lockable disk box, mouse and joystick (Comp Pro). Boxed, as new. £299 ono. Tel: (061) 799 7247.

Atari 520 STFM, £150 worth of software, mouse, mouse-mat, joystick, blank disks, dust cover. Total value £475. Great bargain at £350. Tel: Cranleigh 0483 271965.

Atari ST Games for sale. Over 300 titles, very latest software £3 each. P. Schennwater, PO Box 69, 2980 AD Riddenkenk, Holland.

Sega Master System with Light Phaser and nine games. Boxed with instructions and leads. £190 (under guarantee). ZX Printer with 5 paper rolls £15 or both £195. Both great condition. Phone Andrew Triggs on 0689 42289.

Sega System boxed as new, includes Outrun, Wonderboy, Secret Command, World Soccer, Great Golf, Astro Warrior, Teddy Boy, Transbot, My Hero, Hang-on. £160 ono. Phone 061 624 9238.

Sega System, 3D glasses, Light Phaser, 2 joysticks, loads of games (worth £540). Will sell for £400. All boxed. May split. Phone Mark on (065883) 393. Everything is worth £750. Bargain at £400.

A fantastic new set of games for only £2.99. You can own Quiz Man I.Q. and Maze on one terrific cassette complete with instructions. Spectrum version only. Send to ULTRABYTE SOFTWARE, 11 Baxter Crescent, Denny, Scotland.

BBC Master 128, dual Opus drive, £250 of latest software inc. Sentinel, Stakers Run, Repton 3, also AMX Super Art, joystick, over 30 disks with 4 boxes. Excellent condition. Bargain £550. Tel:Ashton (0942) 726969.

Atari 1040 STF, with £400 worth of software. All for £400. Phone 01 452 5382. Ask for Flat 1 (after 6pm).

PEN PALS

I am an Atari ST owner who would like Pen Pals from all over the world. Guaranteed reply. Write to: Antoine Degiorgio, Villa Tonantlucant, Triq It-Tiben, St Andrews, Malta.

Dutch Amiga fans are looking for international contacts. Everyone welcome, overseas prefered. Answer 100%. Listing or disk to Chyropractorsoft, PO Box 551, 2140 AN Hoofddap, Holland attn Arthur. Also looking for Eastern European contacts!!!

Amiga Penpals wanted from all over the world. Write to Chris Gin, 154 Panama Road, Otahuhu, Auckland, New Zealand. Must write regularly. All letters replied to. First in, First served.

Amiga Pen Pals wanted from all over the world. Write to Martyn Jones, 12 Brynawel Tce, Cwmllynfell, Swansea, S.Wales SA9 2YT, UK.

Norwegian Atari ST user wants pen pals from all over the world. I will answer all letters. Write to Boye Bjorklund, Pettersberga 9, 3340 Aamot, Norway.

Atari ST user wishes to swap hints, tips etc. with other users world wide. Tel: 0622 61917 or write to Ian Beevis, 13 Leicester Road, Shepway, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7QA. Now!

Amiga owner wants to contact other Amiga freaks from all around the world. I promise to answer all letters. Write to me: Paul Owen, 78 Powrie Street, Glenfield, Auckland 10, New Zealand.

Amiga User wants Amiga pen pals and contacts from all over the world. Guaranteed reply. Write to David Carlin, PO Box 12-814, Penrose 5, Auckland, New Zealand.

Amiga £ C64 owner wants penpals worldwide to exchange hints etc. All letters guaranteed reply. Write to: Andrew Cheung, 12 New Street, Donaghadee, Co Down, N. Ireland BT21 0AG, or phone 0247 882124 after 4pm.

Amiga User would like Penpals from all over the world. Also have C64. I will guarantee a reply. If interested write to: Jeff Cook, 45 Westbury St, Laisterdyke, Bradford BD4 8PB, W.Yorks

CBM 64 owner with tape and disk wants a pen pal form anywhere in the world or England preferably male and over 15. Write to Tony Quansah, 1 Batley Road, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 0AA, England.

SWAPLINE

Amiga owner will swap: Three Stooges, Arazok's Tomb, Backlash and Impact for other Amiga games, also will sell Euromax Pro+ for £6 (hardly used). Write to Gary Patterson, 73 Chester Grove, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 5SN.

Sega Games to swap: Outrun, Enduro Racer, Choplifter and Transbot. We want Space Harrier, Fantasy Zone, Zillion 2 and After Burner. Will split. Also C64 games and blank tapes. Phone (0793) 46794.

USER GROUPS

MSX – NEED a MSX Club? Then why not join one of the UK's biggest MSX Clubs. Overseas members welcome. For information sen SAE to: MSX CENTRAL, 14 The Wardens Ave, Allesley, Coventry CV5 9GJ, England.

WE NEED MEMBERS who live in the Essex area to join Computer Club. All computers included. To find out more, please send an SAE to: P. Downey, Fairbanks, School Lane, Great Leighs, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 1NL.

ATARI ST – USER GROUP with the best games and tips around. 'You name it, we've got it'. – Phone or write/visit: 41 Bennett Rd, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex. Tel: 599 6521 Ask for Shane (after 6pm).

FANZINES

ICEWORLD, the new Dr Who fanzine is out. Issues 1,2,3,4 available now. Interviews, reviews, competitions, merchandise, news, books etc. Issue 5 out July 2nd. £1.20 inc P/P. Mark Short, 3 Daneway Gardens, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4XA

ISSUE 1 OF ULTRABYTE FANZINE OUT NOW! Reviews, charts, previews, compos and a letter page plus more on cassette. Send SAE and also send 90p plus 30p P&P to ULTRABYTE FANZINE, 24 Souillac Drive, Denny, Scotland.

SPECTRE – New fanzine for Speccy reviews, PBM's, videos, tips and more. To buy this crucial fanzine (A4 size) send 35p and SAE to: Jonathan Bell, 26 Chaffers Mead, Ashtead, Surrey KT21 1NG. Tel: Ashtead 72919.

MSX GAZETTE at least 25 pages each month. £1 trial issue, £12 yearly membership. Cheques, postal orders. Robert Wilson, 47 Reedswood Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 8DW. Tel: (0424) 714116 after 4pm. Payment to MSX GAZETTE.

RAM, the fanzine for the young gamer. Reviews, news, coin-ops etc. 25p, 13 pages. RAM, 23 Kingsbury Ave, St Albans, Herts AL3 4TA.

ADVENTURE!!!! 'SOOTHSAYER' is a 48 page monthly mag, packed with solutions, maps, news, helplines and much more!! Send £1.25 for sample copy to: J R Barnsley, 32 Merrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford ST17 9EB.

SOOTHSAYER – The 48 page monthly magazine for all adventurers! Send just £1.25 for sample copy (or SAE for full details) to: J R Barnsley, 32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs ST17 9EB, England.

MISCELLANEOUS

ATARI ST AND AMIGA quality colour dot matrix printing for Degas, .NEO, .IFF, .PIC files. Only 35p per A4 size page (10p for B/W) plus 30p P+P. Magnum Printing, 13 Pringle Lane, Galashiels, Selkirkshire TD1 1RL

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'THE MIND BOGGLES' – coming soon. Features 'C', Basic, M-code sections, 100 Channel Chat, Adventures, Fast Message System, 'Build A Storm', plus special interest groups for IBM, BBC, Amiga, ST etc. Public Domain Software and more . . .

DEATHZONE – A new futuristic PBM, is a game where the aims are to win and to survive. Startup: £1. Further turns 50p. Contact: Jonathan Bell, 26 Chaffers Mead, Ashtead, Surrey KT21 1NG. Tel: Ashtead 72919.

REALMS OF VEHOR – PBM. Explore a strange world where Magick is in an eternal struggle against Science. Send cheque £2.50 for rules, Start-up plus two turns to A. Leach, 104 Lowtown, Pudsey, Leeds LS28 9AX.

OUT OF WORK CBM 64 programmer seeks work. Utilities, games, anything. Currently writing MT32 Editor. Call Adrian on Bristol 871924 'tween 11am and 7pm.

CPC DISC 20. Part fanzine – part programme. Over 100K of 'Typed-In' games etc. Send £2.00 plus 50p P+P (recd deliv) to: 11 Stanley Villas, Greenway Road, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 4NW. Also send blank disk!

POSTAL MANAGEMENT. Leave the rest – join the best! A new realistic postal football management simulation. Special discount for those who apply immediately. For further details contact M. Smith, 31 Coleridge Ave, Penarth, S.Wales CF6 1SQ now!!!

PROFESSIONAL PBM SOCCER LEAGUE. Fully computer moderated features including League and Cup games, transfers and internationals. Start-Up pack £4, subsequent turns £1.30 per fortnight. Write to Grimsdale Games, 12 Aspen Way, Cringleford, Norwich, NR4 6UA.

THE ST USER CLUB requires more members. It includes regular magazine. Only £2.00 membership fee per year. Write to us for details. The ST User Club, 10 Teesdale Court, London Road, Middx. TW7 5AS.

EVER WANTED TO FIGHT fantastic battles on faraway planets with amazing weaponry against incredible odds? Play PLANETWAR, a new PBM game. Start-Up is £1.50 and turns are cheap! Contact 42 Rolston Road, Hornsea, North Humberside, Yorkshire.

HUMBERSIDE PUBLIC DOMAIN LIBRARY ANNOUNCEMENT! LOOK! We can offer a wide selection of software for the ATARI ST for only £1.23! – to our knowledge the best value of any of our competitors! Not only this, but as a special launch prize we are GIVING AWAY A PIECE OF ORIGINAL COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE WORTH £25 to the first lucky customer to purchase three or more titles! Send only 13p cheque/P.O. for our catalogue to: Humberside Public Domain Library, 2 Old Mill Close, Market Weighton, York. YO4 3DU, made payable to Humberside Public Domain Library.

STAR MARINES – Hi-tech combat PBM set in the 23rd century. Start-up pack costs £6.00 (including two free turns). Subsequent turns £1.50. Please make cheques/PO payable to NG Games, PO Box XG27, Leeds LS15 9TA.

CHEQUERED FLAG and GOLF WORLD TOUR. Two great new PBM's from Sport (by mail). Send SAE for more details. But hurry! Places going fast. SPORT (by mail), 55 Delph Approach, Blackburn, Lancs BB1 2BH.

QUEST – Fantasy PBM. Become a thief, priest, warrior or wizard and enter Questron. Your destiny awaits. Start-up: £1.50, Turns 75p. Send money to: Mike Ward, 3 Queen Eleanors Drive, Jacobean Grange, Copt Heath, Solihull B93 9LY.

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Mercy Dash
OUR HALF-CUT HALF-PINT HEROINE HAS GONE UNDERCOVER (AND UNDERWEAR) AS A NEWSFIELD EDITOR IN THE HOPE OF TRAPPING A POSSIBLE MURDERER. BUT, WHAT IS THIS, DIRTY READER? SOME RAT IS TRYING TO RUB OUT THE SMASHING MS DASH! ANY SIMILARITY BETWEEN WHAT FOLLOWS, AND MEL CROUCHER'S SCRIPT IS THERE IF YOU REALLY LOOK! HONEST!!
Copyright © 1988 Mel Croucher | Robin Evans
MOTHER OF RICO, IS THIS THE END OF MERCY-?
Editor's note to Mel & Robin: This is getting smutty!! Keep it up.
MERCY! IT'S ME OUT HERE! IT'S MEL!
COMING UP!
CROUCHER! YOU BULBOUS-NOSED, WRINKLY-BONCED, SQUINTY-EYED NIT! DRAW ME A RIGHT HOOK SO I CAN BIFF YOUR TRUNK IN!
OH, HOW DEEPLY AMUSING. DRAW A DOOR OVER THERE SO EVANS CAN GET IN!
HURRY UP!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT!
THANK GAWDFA... EEK! SORRY, MERCY, I DIDN'T REALISE YOU WEREN'T DECENT!
YOU SHOULD DO BY NOW, BOGIE-BRAIN! NOW DRAW ME MY PROPER ARM AND MY GUN! WE GOT WORK TO DO!
ALL RIGHT, BUT NO MORE 'SMART ART' BIZNIS...
TA, SUCKER!
EEK! HOW COME YOU'RE DRAWING THE GUN ON ME?
WELL YOU DREW IT ON ME! NOW GET CROUCH BACK IN, AND DRAW THE ENTIRE CAST INTO A COMFORTABLE ROOM-AND BEFORE YOU ASK-A DRAWING ROOM!!
DURING AN INTERMISSION, WHILE ROBIN DRAWS THE ROOM, OUR LOVABLE DETRACTOR, PLEBLY, VOICES HIS PUNY OBJECTIONS.
I don't think mersy Dash is very brill, becos there are too many words in it and girls are soppy. -yores, w. plebly.
WHADDIZDIS?
HOW COME I'M HERE?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS EXPERIMENTAL SHADING TECHNIQUE?
GROOVY- BUT EVERYTHING'S LIKE LOOKING THROUGH A BATHROOM WINDOW
YEAH- IT HELPS JOG EVANS' MEMORY WHEN HE'S DRAWING THE NUDE SCENES!
WHA'?
BDOW
ROBIN, I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME LOOK LIKE PRINCE CHARLES!
YOU ARE PRINCE CHARLES- OLI FREY'S OVER THERE!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT NOW LISTEN UP! I'LL TELL YOU WHY I'VE GATHERED YOU HERE!
SOMEBODY'S BEEN BUMPING OFF NEWSFIELD EDITORS, AS SUPPLIED BY THE SNOW WHITE AGENCY
I TOOK THE JOB ON -- BUT REALLY I WAS AN UNDER-COVER DICK!
THE KILLER DIDN'T KNOW THAT- AND I ALMOST GOT RUBBED OUT - DIDN'T I, UNCLE MEL?
I SAVED YOU, MERCY! I SURPRISED THE KILLER-THEY MUST HAVE RUN OFF WHEN THEY HEARD ME!
ANYWAY- WHERE'S HIS MOTIVE?
FOR THE OTHER SIX-NONE. BUT FOR ME- PLENTY!
HE SPEND HOURS WRITING SCRIPTS THEN I SAY JUST WHAT I LIKE! IN A FIT OF PIQUE, HE MAYBE TRIED TO ERASE THE ARTWORK
IT'S A LIE! YOU CAN'T PIN THAT ON ME!
I SHOULD NEVER ATTEMPT THESE OVERHEAD ANGLES!
SMESHK
SO. MEL WAS THE KILLER.
NO. BUT WHAT A SILLY STUNT! BREAKIZNEK
NOW, WHERE WAS I? AH, YES!
DON'T THINK I'M FOOLED BY YOUR VOUCHING FOR CROUCH, FOUR-EYES! YOU'RE HIGH ON THE SUSPECT LIST, YOU SHIFTY GEEZER!
GUB
FLAG DAY
AND OUR JUVENILE CRITIC, PLEBLY. LIKES HIS COMIC STRIPS PLAIN AND SIMPLE, DOES PLEBLY...
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ME, MERCY? I HAVE A MOTIVE OR TWO TO RUB YOU OUT GOOD!
SO YOU HAVE! SO HAVE TGM FOR CHEAPENING THEIR MAG! SO HAVE SOME OTHER PUTZES! BUT I KNOW HOW TO SOLVE THIS MYSTERY.... UP AGAINST THE WALL!
HNR?
WOW!
BOYO BOY!
MAYBE I DIDN'T SEE MY ASSAILANT... BUT I NEVER FORGET AN ARMPIT! SNIFF, SNIFF. SOON WE, SNIFF, GULP, SHALL KNOW THE... SNIFF, NIFF..
THIS WHOLE THING IS EMBARRASSING!
SHH. YOU'LL HAVE MERCY ON US!
NO! IT CAN'T BE! I D-DON'T BELIEVE IT!!
IFFUN YOOM CAIN'T WAIT FUH NECK'S MUMP'S DAY-NEW-MON, COME AN' MEET MERCY INDIE FLESHK (WAL, SUMMAVIT) AT UM PC SHOW AT UH-LIMP-EE-UH-BE THAR UR BE SKWAR!
CAPTION WRITTEN IN THAT KINDA SPECIAL SLANG/JIVE/STREET/COMIC LINGO THAT THE PUPPIES JUST LOVE. THIS IS SPESHOO FUN OO!
LATER AT THE SHOW..
AH! I SEE YOU'VE MET MERCY DASH.
NEWSFIEL
NO, I'M PAUL COOPER OF THALEMUS. THIS IS THE WAY I LOOK

GO EAST YOUNG MAN*

WIN A HOLIDAY IN EGYPT FOR TWO

Travel to the land of the ancients with GRANDSLAM

OH MUMMY! What dark secrets lie under thousands of years of sandstorms in the kingdom of the Pharoes? You can discover them thanks to **GrandSlam Entertainments** with this amazing Egyptian excursion prize.

GrandSlam are offering you sensational holiday tickets to fly one lucky reader and a guest to Egypt. The reason for all this generosity is the imminent launch of *Power Pyramids*, an addictive game based upon the manoeuvres of a small bouncing ball escaping from a labyrinth of pyramid chambers. According to **GrandSlam**, *Power Pyramids* is highly playable and generally a great game, but then they would say that. So, to prove the point, they're also giving away copies of the game.

The first-prize winner gets a holiday in Egypt for at least a couple of days stay (GrandSlam will make arrangements to suit the winner) and a ticket to take a parent or chum along too. In Egypt you'll experience the magic of the pyramids and lots of sand, they have lots of sand in Egypt you know. There's also a copy of *Power Pyramids* on the Spectrum or Commodore 64/128. We'll warn you now that this comp is also being run in our sister mags CRASH and ZZAP! – so you'll be up against lots of hopeful entrants.

Even if you don't win, there are 25 copies of the game on either format for runners up.

To be in with a chance of winning take a look at the pyramid of letters on this page and, first, tell which Pharoe's name is hidden inside there. Second (and here comes the tricky bit . . .), come up with at least 25 other words (of at least three letters) which can be made from the name. Each letter may only be used once in each word, for example you could only have one A because it only appears once – but you could use two Ts as they appear twice. Got the idea? Good.

The top-prize winner is the person who comes up with the most words, spelt correctly and the right name. Entries please to: **POWER PYRAMIDS COMP, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*** All entries must arrive by September 15 and entrants must follow the competition rules as listed in the masthead or we'll throw you in the Nile.

N
TE
HKM
UTNEA

*...or young woman, TGM is an equal opportunities competitions runner

MUSIC BY PETER GABRIEL

THE RACE AGAINST TIME

COMPUTER GAME





WRITTEN BY
THE OLIVER TWINS

ALL PROFITS TO
SPORT AID '88

Code Masters Software Co Ltd
P.O Box 6, Southam,
Leamington Spa, CV33 0SH

READERPAGE

number of subjects one of which voices his concern over 'dirty raincoat' software advertising: **"This type of promotion may be amusing to the marketing boys but, I envisage computer magazines incorporating centrefolds resembling those of Playboy."**
Stephen's letter earns him £40 of software from READERPAGE

GOT A LIGHT MAC?

Dear Games Machine
I am sure that Palace Software were justified in using Maria Whittaker to advertise *Barbarian* (and now *Barbarian II*) as was the review of *Strip Poker II Plus* to show a screenshot of the game, but what has a two-page spread of a semi-clad, reposing female got to do with a computer game about pigs!? This type of promotion may be amusing to the marketing boys but I envisage future issues of computer magazines incorporating centrefolds resembling those of *Playboy*. Next time boys, leave the dirty raincoats at home.

On to Mel's Opinion piece 'I Accuse'. Indeed what he says may be true. His opinion that the *Star Wars* film was based on Andersen's, *The Snow Queen* seems quite correct and I agree that the *Blade Runner* idea was filched, after all, the film barely resembled the book. The only thing that carried the film through was the special effects, highly praised in your Cyberpunk article.

Tears In Rain, the three-page homage to *Blade Runner*, however, would have been a lot better if the writer covered more than one film. In reporting on Cyberpunk it is hardly necessary to give a complete synopsis on the whole film! After all, while most of the ideas were new to film, Syd Mead had been drawing on them for years. A film that is revolutionary, ahead of its time and full of deep meaning is *2001 – A Space Odyssey* – still the best and most realistic space film to be released. As far as what the future may hold, the excellently satirical *Brazil* is a masterpiece with brilliant attention to detail.

Max Headroom is hardly original – the *Heechee Trilogy* by Frederick Pohl, saved the main character from death by storing his memory and thoughts in a spaceship's mainframe, sharing it with the ship's own computer system. Even *Doctor Who* did it in *The Face Of Evil* with a city-wide mainframe taking on the personality of the Doctor's withheld evil personality. That was in 1976.

What was intriguing in TGM**009** was the Ghost In The Machine article. Whilst there may be some truth in the supernatural, generally ghost stories are lost to heavy-handed journalism and single-mindedness. Barnaby Page did an excellent job in giving us the plain, unbiased facts.
Stephen A Graham, Carlisle, Cumbria

You must read Stuart Wynne's rejoinder to Mel Croucher's theorising – he's been steaming ever since he read it! Barnaby, on the other hand, is blushing.

THE SHOW THAT DIDN'T

Dear Games Machine
Where is the report about the CES show you promised for TGM**009**?

I have just bought the mag and there is no mention of it. Are you saving it for a future issue?

I have attained information on when you might be able to purchase the PC Engine. It comes from a major stockist of consoles and software. The PC Engine will be released early next year in America and it is highly unlikely that you will see one for sale in the UK for at least a year.

I have just received information that the 16-bit Nintendo has been unleashed on the Japanese console market and it will take at least two years for it to appear in the UK.
A Gaffar, Leicester

Unfortunately the CES show report arrived in the office too late to include it in TGM009, and as we like to be first with the news there seems little point in featuring it in a later issue. We think you will find more than the stockist you talked to looking at the PC Engine, but thank you for your news . . . we'll add it to the rumour file.

THOSE LASER HAZY DAYS

I have big news regarding your article on the *Dragon's Lair* laser disc (TGM**009**)! This is nowhere near the first home laser disc game. There were a few available in 1985 for the Pioneer MSX. Although I don't own a Pioneer system (I have a Toshiba HX10) I managed to play the game *Strike Mission*, mentioned in the review. It was a truly amazing experience. The sound was fantastic and the graphics unbelievable.

Thanks for supporting an MSXcellent machine!
Andrew Bignell, Wokingham, Berks

Andrew enclosed an old advertisement with his letter to prove his point about the Pioneer laser disc game. In fact, when you think of it, it is strange that no one else has attempted the link-up before now . . .

MSX CENTRAL

Dear Games Machine
I get a lot of people coming around to me at MSX Central to look at the MSX-II system. People can't believe that it is an MSX taking into account its excellent graphics etc. Since TGM put my ad in for the club back in December letters haven't stopped coming in from MSX users from all over the world, Saudi Arabia, Africa, South America, plus countries closer to home.

I am not saying that the MSX is the best computer money can buy, only that it is worth considering when in the market for a new machine. How many other computers are intercompatible?

If anyone needs more information on MSX Central please send a SAE to this address: **David Krawczyk, MSX Central, *14 The Wardens Ave, Allesley Village, Coventry, West Midlands CV5 9GJ.***

SEGA OWNER SEEKS CONSOLATION

Dear Games Machine
I feel you are letting us Sega owners down. Some of the earlier reviews like *Secret Command* didn't have a screen shot. You always seem to put Sega games down from the start; *Out Run* for example. The arcade game costs around £3,000+; by comparison £25 for the excellent Sega version represents value for money. Be fair! The Sega is a great console for the money. I would like to see more reviews, news and higher percentage rates please. Lastly, why don't you have a readers chart for the computers and consoles.?
David Cooper, Acklam, Middlesbrough

Firstly David, if the software for the Sega was worthy of higher percentages it would receive them! Secondly it looks as if this is about to happen. Mastertronic have recently supplied us with four games which at this early stage of review look interesting to say the least. We think the Sega console is a good machine and hope that its software will become worthy of it.

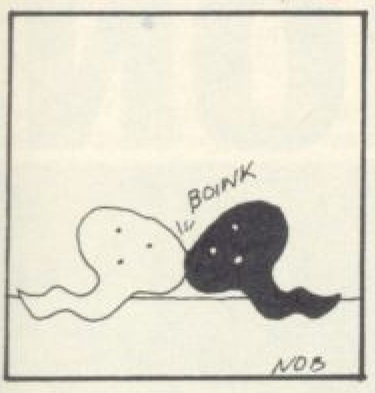
STRIP JOKER

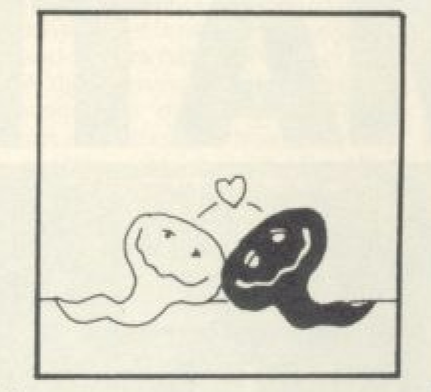
Dear Games Machine
Who draws Cutey Poo? It's totally brill! Have you ever thought of running a competition to find out who can create the most amusing strip?

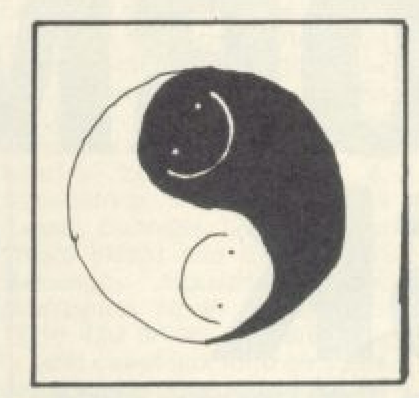
As stated in previous issues, TGM is trying to move away from computers. Have you thought of video and cinema



CUTEY-POO FALLS IN LOVE







reviews? Last month's video camera article was good, as was the *Lazer Tag* review a few months ago.

What about showing us how a game is developed (*ie* artwork, graphics etc) as ZZAP! did with *Morpheus*.
Stephen Hunter, Roxburgh, Scotland

Cutey Poo is drawn by Andrew Endersby. He sent his idea on the offchance that we might use it. Andrew created the character and as such it would be unfair to copy his idea. Of course if you have any original ideas of your own . . . ?! A feature on game designers is in the planning stages, stay tuned.

MAGAZINE MAYHEM

Dear Games Machine
How how long does it take to create an issue of TGM? What's the cost? Is it really hard work?

Perhaps the best way to answer my question is to include a special feature in a future issue describing how your magazine is pulled together.

Also by the way, why hasn't Newsfield Publication got a 16-bit-only magazine?
Ian Robinson, Tottenham, London

An issue of TGM takes aproximately two months to create and costs each of its staff their blood – which isn't such a high price to pay for keeping you happy. The cost would frighten you half to death, at least it would if you are anything like our Financial Director, but say around £40,000 per issue. To describe it as hard work would be an understatement! Your feature idea is certainly one worth considering, if we ever get the time!

16-bit-only? Why worry? TGM covers more 16-bit software than almost any dedicated magazine anyway.

SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Dear Games Machine
I am presently an undergraduate studying engineering at university. I have been the proud owner of three computers since 1982, beginning with the humble, rubber-keyed Spectrum 48K. Since that time I've owned a Commodore 64 and now an Amiga 500. I am in no way ashamed to admit that the first two computers were used for playing games at least 90% of the time.

Playing computer games has in no way been detrimental to my education, social life or any other aspect of day-to-day living. I've worked extremely hard at school to gain entry to a good university and set myself up for a decent future – the computer never once prevented me from achieving my goal in that respect.

In fact, the relaxation provided by a session on the computer was beneficial in allowing me to divert my mind from more taxing problems (such as long overdue project work). Playing games has not turned me in to a recluse either. I play football, cricket and frequently go to the pub and nightclubs. The computer is very much a background thing; a way to relax and yet, if required, enable my mind to remain active with a good strategy game (I am looking forward to the release of *UMS* on the Amiga).
M Williams, Aylesbury, Bucks

There are a few people working for TGM who wouldn't mind a spot of university as a relaxation from playing computer games, but we get your point! You sound as though you're replying (in an open letter) to someone who has suggested that computer game players are recluses . . . we though those people went out with the skateboard fad . . .

LONG CUTEY-POO

Dear Games Machine
If, as Kenneth Jackson from Edinburgh suggests (TGM**006**), 8-bit computers are 'fading', why do companies such as Incentive keep pouring money, manpower and time into games as brilliant as *Dark Side? Its rating of 93% (TGM***008***) makes it one of the highest in the July issue, even beating Interceptor* on the Amiga. This situation arises often; *Captain Blood* Amstrad 76%, Atari ST 74%, *Beyond The Ice Palace* Amstrad 78%, Atari ST 84% and so on.

Leave the 8-bit gamers alone, we've got years left in us and with companies like Incentive we can expect good software in the future.

Why don't you make Cutey-Poo a full length cartoon strip instead of Mercy Dash who just isn't funny.
David Mann, Rosyth, Fife

Because she's just what . . . ? Don't knock Mercy, she's in love with 8-bit machines, and the 'faders' are wrong; the 8-bit market has never looked so healthy. If it weren't for the 8-bit market there would be no 16-bit games around. Most ideas for Amiga and Atari ST software are derived from 8-bit products. Until 16-bit owners are sufficient in number (and if the 8-bit market decrease drastically) to make software companies enough money to survive, 8-bit will live. As for Cutey-Poo, too much of a good thing is not good for you!

So what's going down, or up or anywhere? Got anything to say? Anything to complain about (or praise, let's not be negative)? Write to READERPAGE, TGM, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB* – we're here to listen.

the GAMES machine

COMPETITION RESULTS

MARAUDER

Hewson offered a top prize of a radio-controlled car, with copies of the game *Battlecar Marauder* going to the runners-up.
The winner is **Jamie Lumiste**, Surrey CR2 0PA. While the 30 runners-up are:
Crash Reader, Manchester M10 7PG; David Hunter, Sunderland SR5 4EN; Kelly Richardson, Northants NN10 9UE; Mike Thomas, S Wales CF8 1PG; J Pettigrew, Gwynedd LL65 3NY; Stuart Newman, W Midlands B66 3PU; Johnson Tang, South Glamorgan CF2 4NL; AW Kenny, Cheshire CW1 4HZ; Geert Braakhekke, NETHERLANDS; Neil Stewart, Glasgow G41 4DF; Simon Salwan, Hampshire PO8 0ET; Patrick Walsh, Berks SL3 8NX; Darren Podd, Northampton NN3 4TF; B Shimmings, E Sussex TN38 8BD; Helen Weeks, London; Robert Hamilton, Shropshire SY2 5LY; Andrew Clarke, Lancs OL16 3UB; David Coverley, Cleveland TS11 6DG; J Harron, N Ireland BT81 7AG; John M Hoggard, Merseyside L44 4EJ; R Evans, Powys SY21 7HP; Ian Shauin, Liverpool L11 9AG; Ian Muirhead, Glasgow G14 9JJ; Simon Peaker, Wakefield WF2 8LE; Mark Fletcher, Glasgow G42 9BR.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE DARK

Courtesy of **Incentive Software**, the lucky winner of the *Dark Side* competition receives a home lazer show – guaranteed to break the ice at parties. He is **Chaz Crammond**, Leicestershire LE2 5PA.

The 10 second-prize winners each get a Freescape free-standing pen:
Neil McCartney, W Yorks WF10 2BZ; David Cleveland TS24 8DX; Steven Bramley, Sheffield S5 7JB; S Ghani, Cleveland TS1 4BU; Paul Galbraith, Tyne & Wear SR3 4AJ; Kevin Patton, Herts HP2 5TG; G Molloy, Reynolds, W Sussex RH10 1QY; P Whittingham, Merseyside L49 2NH; Stuart Taylor, N Wales LL15 1RH; BJ Hoskins, Worcs B97 6GA; Clive Fulcher, Peterborough PE6 0TW; BE Howe, Herts SG1 3NZ; Brett Buckley, W Yorks HD4 7LS; Thomas R MacDonald, Lanarkshire ML7 5AR; Mark Davidson, Exeter EX1 3QE.

25 Runners-up to receive a *Dark Side* A2 poster with artwork by Steiner Lund, plus a key ring.
Simon Ash, Hamps SP11 6DG; Duncan Oates, Lancs BL9 6NW; Revell J Cornell, Northumberland NE24 3QH; John Arnold, W Yorks WF6 2SH; P Rodgers, London E11 5EJ; Sean Murphy, Oldham OL9 9TS; Darren Foster, Glos GL4 7NL; Stephen Harcourt, Essex CM20 3JB; Ben Whittacker-Cook, London SW15 2HQ; Andrew Tate, Tyne & Wear NE25 9UY; Justin J Hewitt, Staffs ST18 0PQ; Stephen Crawford, Wilts SN3 1LF; David Whitehouse, Northants NN15 7HW; Shaun Tooze, Bucks HP5 1YE; Stuart J Wood, Powys SY18 6QF; S Skeauington, Notts NG19 0ET; RJ Merricks, Kent CT21 4NS; Damian P Collier, W.Yorks LS26 0UB; Howard Glynn, Tyne & Wear NE25 8BG; J Archer, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE15 7TF; B Mooney, Tyne & Wear NE37 3EL; Chris Price, W Glamorgan SA4 2LS; Joe Hanley, Middx HA6 2TL; Daniel Leyden, Bathgate EH48 4BB; Michael F McGleenon, N Ireland, BT66 8PB.

NEVER MIND THE BALLS

In celebration of the success of *Football Manager 2*, TGM and **Addictive** joined forces to give away a Toshiba Midi HiFi system, no less. And the winner is **Sarah Storm**, Cheshire SK11 8ES. 25 Runners-up each receive a signed copy of the game.
RW Percy, Bristol BS9 1QP; Dimitrios Smith, Bath BA1 7AS; Shahbaz Moghal, Hants SO1 5AS; Matthew Gage, Kent ME12 1DX; Patrick Vandernat, Channel Islands; Renias Tozowonah, Tyne & Wear NE8 1T8; David Black, Gateshead NE9 7BX; Nicky Smillie, Ayrshire KA18 3BG; SI Docherty, Angus DD11 4EB; C Weavers, Hants SO5 2JZ; D Talbot, Dorset BH12 1BQ; Nigel Jones, Clwyd CH5 1JT; M Stephens, Milton Keynes MK3 6LN; Nial Grimes, Dyfed SA15 2NG; Andy Evans, Oxford OX8 1DJ; Tracey Jenkins, Cornwall PL25 3JA; Alex Lacey, Cornwall TR15 1BY; Mrs S Hack, London E6 2AN; Patrick Kingham, London N20 9AR; Julian Hart, Kent TN10 4EG; Maxim Van Veen, Holland; Colin Noller, Chester CH1 6DX; Matthew Tidsey, Lancs BL3 4RX; Eddie H Gilmartin, Scotland G75 0PP; Steve Gould, Stourbridge DY9 8YB.

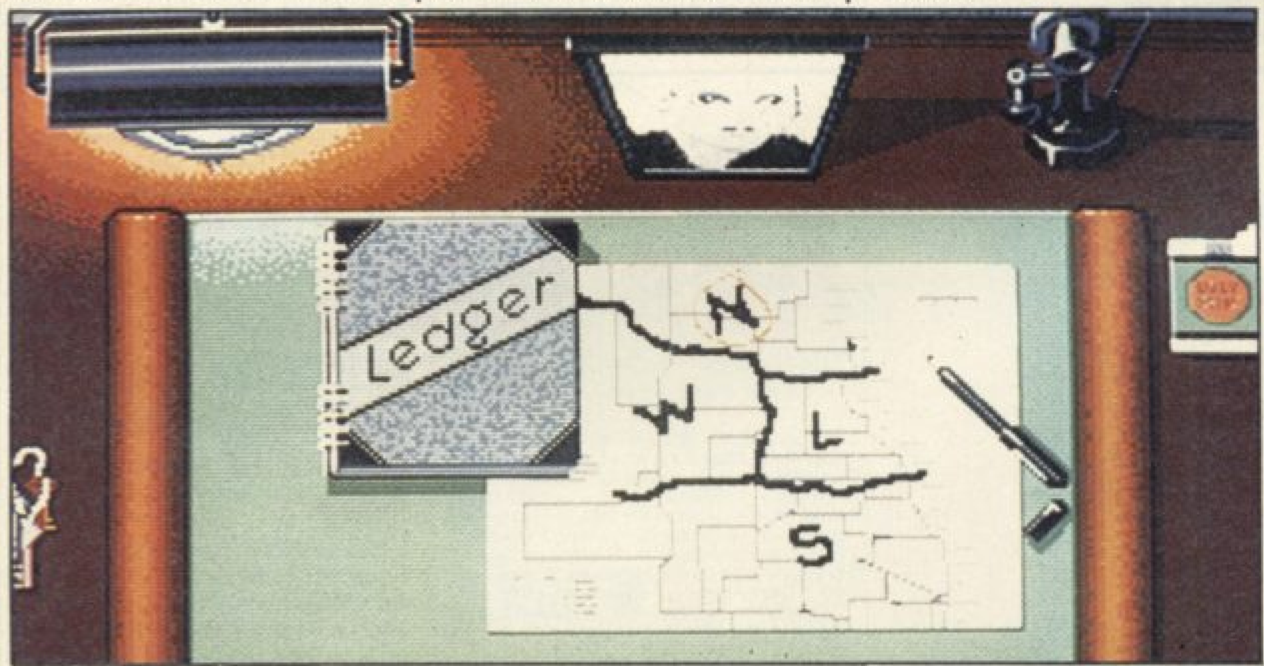
INFORMATION DESK

No maps this time round, just the raw facts from Robin Hogg manning the ever-busy Information Desk.

First off this month is K DOYLE from Lancashire.

- Could you tell me what is happening with the planned ST conversions of the Cinemaware range, including games such as *Sinbad* and *King Of Chigaco*. Also what has happened to *Ancient Mariner* from Systems Architects?

***Sinbad And The Throne Of The Falcon* on the Atari ST is scheduled for an Autumn release around October/ November and will probably be priced at £29.99. The ST version of *King Of Chicago* is planned, but no release date yet. Price will, again, probably be £29.99. As for the legendary *Ancient Mariner*, we've heard nothing of it recently, seen nothing of it and can't make contact with Systems Architects themselves.**



- I own an Atari ST and I wish to learn machine code for games programming. Could you recommend a book covering the subject which also covers information on sprite handling, scrolling and most game aspects. Could you also recommend a suitable assembler?

I too am trying to learn 68000 and a book I'm currently reading by Abacus is *Atari ST Machine Language*. It takes the reader right back to the basics and is aimed at the novice programmer, so it doesn't cover the more technical routines such as game specific programming. Nevertheless it's a good book to get started with and although the example programs are specifically suited to the Abacus *AssemPro* assembler/disassembler package, with a little modification the programs will run on any assembler. The book is £14.95 and the *AssemPro* assembler is £49.95. Order them from Abacus, *c/o Precision Software, 6 Park Terrace, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 7J2* ☎01-330-7161.

Alternatively, try the excellent *Fast Basic* from Computer Concepts ☎ 0442 63937 which at £89.90 on ROM Cartridge or £44.85 on disk, is primarily a Basic language, but the package also includes a good 68000 assembler which should suit your needs very well.

- If I was to buy a cartridge for an MSX-II, would there be any difference in sound or graphics if it was run on a different MSX-II?

In theory there should be no difference whatsoever in anything if run on a different MSX-II system. Upon enquiring, Konami confirmed this, so it's good news all round for MSX-II owners.

- I have the *Devpac* assembler and was wondering if you know of any good book on assembly language for the absolute beginner.

I phoned Hisoft, publishers of *Devpac*, and they told me that the manual supplied with the program recommends books to try. Perhaps a reader out there can recommend a book on the subject.

- I own an Atari 8-bit machine and wonder what has happened to the planned Atari 8-bit conversions of *Jackal*, *Head Over Heels*, *Sky Runner* and *Bangkok Knights*?

Bad news I'm afraid, but astoundingly *none* of the above-mentioned titles have come out or are coming out. *Jackal* and *Head Over Heels* simply failed to appear, *Sky Runner* was written but unfortunately was riddled with bugs and was subsequently never released. *Bangkok Knights* fell by the wayside and was never released. A shame considering the Atari's graphics and sound capabilities.

- When will Atari be releasing the XF 551 disk drive and for how much?

The double-sided disk drive is available but the controlling software known as A-DOS isn't. The existing *Starter DOS* can be used with the drive to make it operate as a double sided drive or DOS version 2.5 can be used for single sided drive operation. Either way, the A-DOS will not be ready for at least another three months. If you want the drive without software contact Silica Shop's mail order department ☎ 01-309 1111. If you do purchase the drive from Silica Shop before the DOS software comes out then the software will be sent to you when it becomes available.

- I bought one of the first copies of Activision's *Predator* when it was released and the graphics had big black blocks in the scenery when run on my ST with its 1.09 operating system. Taking it back to the shop it worked fine on their 1.08 system. I have also experienced problems with US Gold's

Gauntlet II and the extra joystick ports. What can I do about it, and why do we need two operating systems for the ST?

The new 1.09 operating system was created primarily to take into account software operations utilising the add-on Blitter chip, in the process Atari also cleaned up the bugs that were present in the original operating system. The answer to software compatability between the two different ST's lies squarely with the software houses - it's up to the programmers to adhere to both standards and not use illegal routines or procedures which could cause problems. US Gold assure us that *Gauntlet II* works with both operating systems. Send the faulty game back to US Gold, explaining what is wrong with it and US Gold will send you a working version. The address is, For The Attention Of Paul Sutton, US Gold Returns Department, *Units 2 and 3, Holford Way, Birmingham B6 7AX*. As to the *Predator* problem, go back to the shop where you bought it as they are the people responsible for selling you the game



- I am writing on behalf of many readers who are confused about the 520 STFM internal disk drives. Different mail order firms are offering what appear to be the same computers but with different disk drives. Which is standard and which is best?

When the 520 STFM originally came out the internal disk drive was of the half-megabyte (360K formatted) variety which reads only one side of a disk. Thus ST games which intended to fill up all the machines memory had to use two disks, unlike the Amiga A500 which has a megabyte disk drive. Atari is now changing this, and all the 520 STFMs bundled in the Summer Packs have one megabyte disk drives. STFMs not bundled in this way will continue to be of the half megabyte variety until being gradually phased out. Naturally the one megabyte disk drives are more useful, although games programs are unlikely to cater for it while most people have the original drives.

- Have you any information or address I can write to concerning the combat games where two teams try to capture the opponent's flag using guns that fire paint pellets?

As you rightly guessed in your letter, Keith, the game is called Combat Zone and a day out was covered in ZZAP 64! not so long ago. The address to write to is Combat Zone (UK) Ltd, *PO Box 22, Loughton, Essex. Have fun!*

- *Can you list the major UK arcade game distributors such as Sega and Atari as they aren't in the phone book and no one in my local arcade will tell me?*

The first thing you should realise is that the coin-op companies only have offices here in the UK, and they only deal with the administrative side of things. It's left to the dealers, so try your arcade for the address of their distributors.

- *How much is Taito's Double Dragon* as a complete system?

Searching through the trade magazines *Coin Slot* and *Amusement Business*, we came across *Double Dragon* machines for sale as a complete system (monitor, cabinet and the all-important PCB) for anything between £800 around £900. A lot of companies deal only with the trade, the private selling of coin-ops is often a lot of aggravation for both buyer and seller (especially if the machine goes wrong). Two firms you could try though are Keeday Leisure at *Unit 6, Ravenstone Road Industrial Estate, Coalville, Lecestershire* ☎0530 810233 and Euromax at *Bessingby Industrial Estate, Bridlington, North Humberside YO16 4SJ* ☎0262 601006/602541. In both cases ask for their sales department. Do write and tell me how you got on as I'm considering purchasing a *Star Wars* machine.

- Can you tell me if the DIY version of Load It is still available and how much it costs?

A limited number of DIY kits, about 200, are still available for £9.95 from Load-It kit, Mills Associates, *1 Wonastow, Monmouth, Gwent NP5 3AS* ☎0600 4611. Obviously the kit doesn't provide the same standard of service as the firm's purpose-built data cassette, but is much cheaper. Apparently both products have sold very well indeed, and most especially in Scandinavia for some strange reason.

- A friend of mine is going over to France this summer and I'd like to know if their Nintendo games will work here as I've heard they've got some games we haven't.

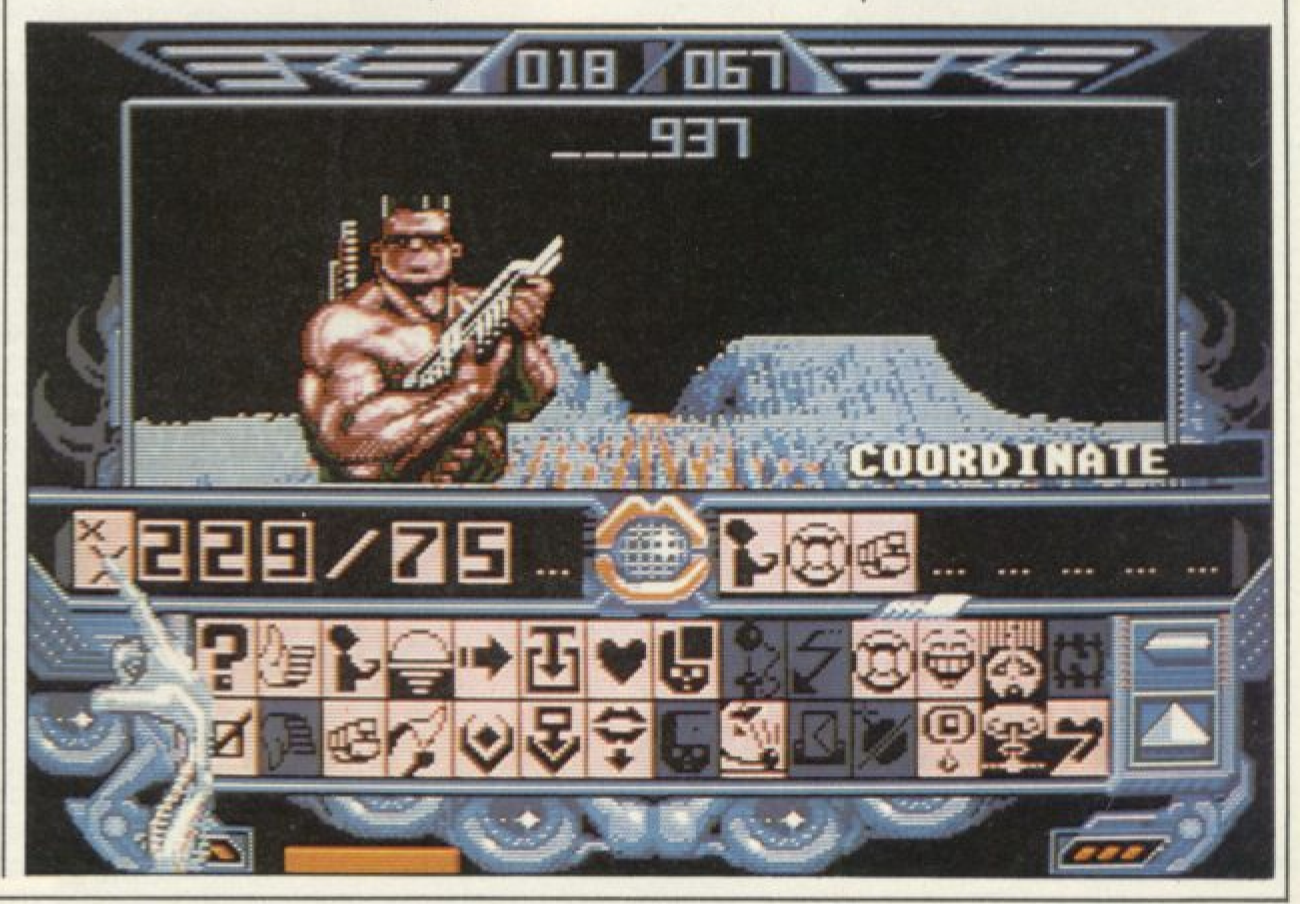
Unfortunately European countries use different TV systems to us hence the cartridges are incompatible. Don't despair though, we're looking forward to reviewing a lot of new UK releases very soon, like *Legend Of Zeldar, Adventures of Link, Mike Tyson's Punch-Out, Pro-Wrestling* and Rare's fabulous *RC Pro-Am*.

- Please can you explain to me what sampled sound is? Do you need to buy a special device to produce sampled sound or will an Atari 520 STFM produce sampled sound by itself?

Unlike records or standard cassette tapes, which are analog recordings, sampled sound relies on the far superior method of digital recording. This converts music into binary code without the degradation associated with analog recording and can be stored like any other piece of code (Digital recording is part of what makes compact discs and DAT so exciting).

Theoretically the code can be used to perfectly replicate the original sound-subject to the limitations of the playback device as a sound system. A hi-fi, or even a computer such as the Archimedes has very sophisticated speakers allowing great fidelity in playback, but the ST isn't so well blessed although it can still be very effective. *Star Trek*, for example, opens with the real intro from the series and has sampled sound effects such as Scotty saying 'the engines cannae take it'. An equally impressive example of ST sampled sound is the Jean Michel Jarre music used to introduce *Captain Blood*.

If you have any queries concerning computers andElectronic Entertainment or would like to pass on your hints, tips, maps and more besides, write to INFORMATION DESK, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*. You can also MBX us with I-D TGM.



UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) How many micros were sold in the USA last year, to the nearest million?

2) What software houses lurk inside these depravities? I AM A CANER, SLY RAPE, MAD A/C TOSSER, I BLUBBER ON.

3) Why did Midland and Nat West Bank customers get no service from cash dispensers over the New Year holiday?

4) What's the difference between MacByte and Samantha Fox?



5) What is this pranny trying to promote? **a)** Dirty Macs, **b)** Silly Hats, **c)** Microdealer T-Shirts?

6) What does **CP/M**,**MCP**,**MPC** and **CMP** stand for?

7) Captain Midnight was a 1940s radio hero. Who is Captain Midnight in the 1980s?

8 The world-wide shortage of 256K D-RAM chips has inflated costs from £3 to how much? **a)** £5, **b)** £15, **c)** look, I'll give you a digital watch, a copy of *Spy Catcher* and let you sleep with the Giana Sisters.

9) What is a blitter?

10) *Power Pyramids* author **Julian Skelly** won a 1987 competition for which title? **a)** Killer Beetroot, **b)** Rubic's Pube, **c)** The Absorption Qualities Of Peat?

11) What is Johnny Dumfries? **a)** Code Masters' latest endorsement, **b)** a disgusting meal of cooked rubber goods, **c)**lead singer with The Cunning Stunts?

12) In the world of yuppie computing, how much is a 128K RAM pack for **a)** a Psion Organiser, **b)** a Z88, **c)**H.M. Forces, Cyprus?

13) What aspect ratio (width-to-height) does the common domestic TV screen/monitor have?

14) *Memory writes her light-beam characters*' was written in which year? **a)** 1833, **b)** 1933, **c)** 1973.

15) In which TV sci-fi series did Pamela Stephenson, Eva Ruebenstaier, Judy Geeson and Joan Collins all star?

16) Among other things, what happened on December 4th 1877?

17) What do you get if you cross a vegetarian with John Gilbert?

18) Apart from in a pet shop, where would you find tweeters and woofers?

19) What does the acronym FAST stand for?

20) Which hi-tech Electric bands featured the following performers: Phil May, Jools Holland, Buddy Miles, Jeff Lynne, Kenneth Williams, Denny Laine, Dave Hall?

ANSWERS

1) 20 MILLION
2) 'AMERICAN', 'PLAYERS', 'CODE MASTERS', 'BLUE RIBBON'
3) Their bimbo computer programmers had forgotten to take count of the extra day in Leap Year, and all cash card data was rejected.
4) One's gone bust, the other's bust's gone
5)c) Microdealer T-shirts, which is why you can't see any.
6) Control Program for Microcomputers, Male Chauvinist Pig, Metropolitan Police Commissioner and Croucher Murders a Pint.
7) John MacDougall, the celebrated Florida hacker, who hijacks satellite TV broadcasts.
8) b) £15
9) A turbo device for graphics manipulation (up to three million pixels per second) OR a Japanese pint of ale.
10) c) The Absorption Qualities Of Peat.
11) Correct.
12) a) £100, **b)** £50, **c)** free (see **11b** above)
13) 4:3
14) a) 1833, Thomas Carlisle.
15) *Space 1999.*
16) The first ever sound recording was made when Thomas Edison saved *Mary Had A Little Lamb* onto tin-foil.
17) NO BLOODY FEAR.
18) In a loudspeaker box.
19) Federation Against Software Theft.
20) Electric Banana, The Electric Chairs, Electric Flag, Electric Light Orchestra, Electric Prunes, Electric String Band, Electric Toilet.

NEXT MONTH

IN THE GAMES MACHINE!

- **DOUBLE DRAGON**
  An amazing cover-mounted competition from Mastertronic. Win the original coin-op machine if you can, or get discounts on the computer game.

- **COMPUTERISED CARS**
  Mel Croucher gets driven to distraction by cars of the future, they do everything but make the tea. The Skoda was never like this.

- **TRILLION BIT TRIPS**
  Stuart Wynne can't resist looking at a bit more Cyberpunk. *Robocop* the film, book and computer game come under his scrutiny as does *Neuromancer*, the game of Cyberpunk's most acclaimed novel.

- **GIVE ME AN M**
  Possibly the best music package around for the Atari ST is goes under music-man Batesie's hammer

- **GIVE THAT MAN A SEGA**
  Four, yes count them, FOUR games for the Sega Console have come our way for review courtesy of Mastertronic. Wait till you see *Shinobi*.

- **TAKE A TRIP-A-TRON WITH ME**
  Robin Candy says 'hey man it's blown my mind' (or words to that effect) as he trips out on the Llamasoft light synthesiser.

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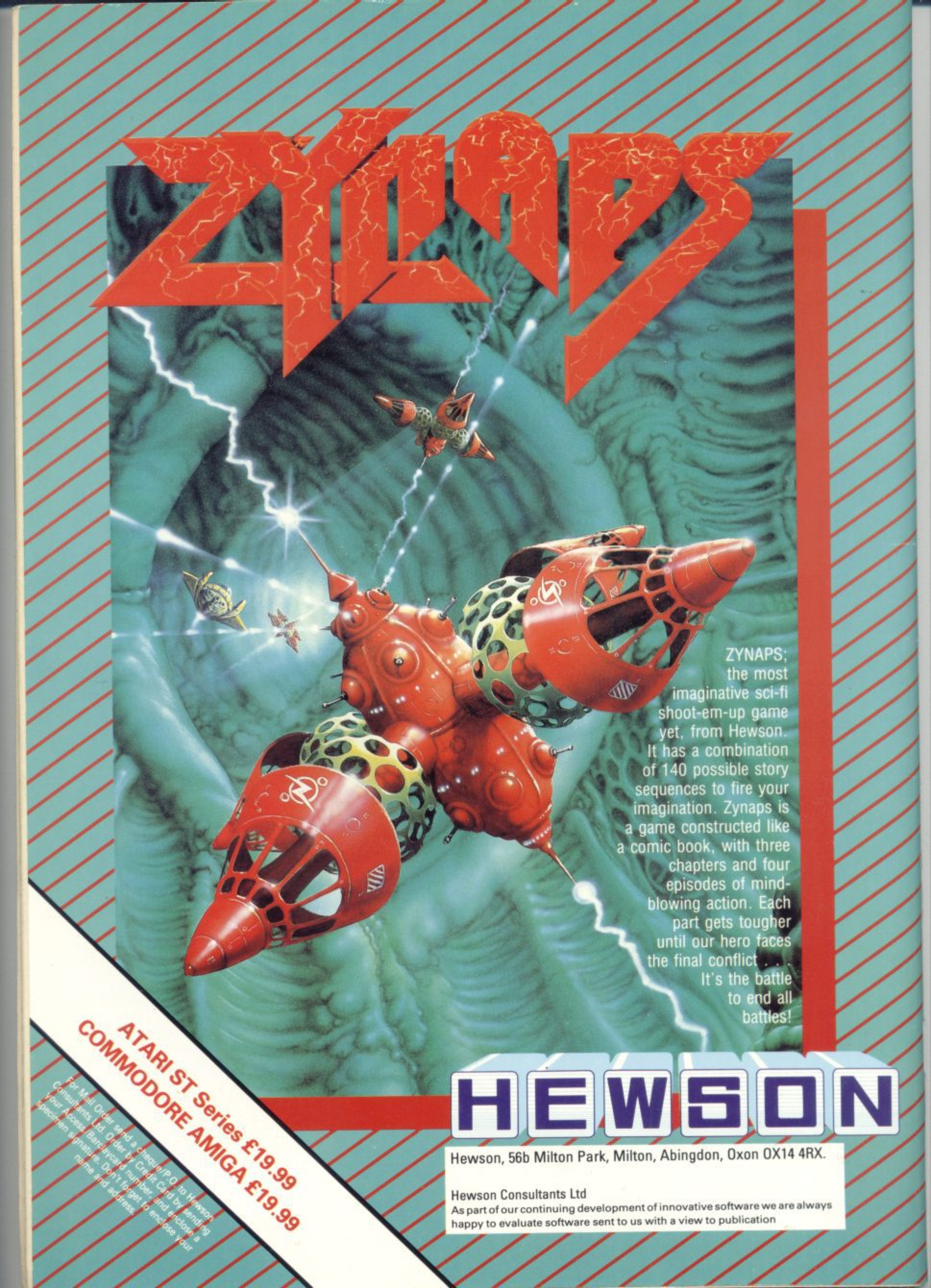
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